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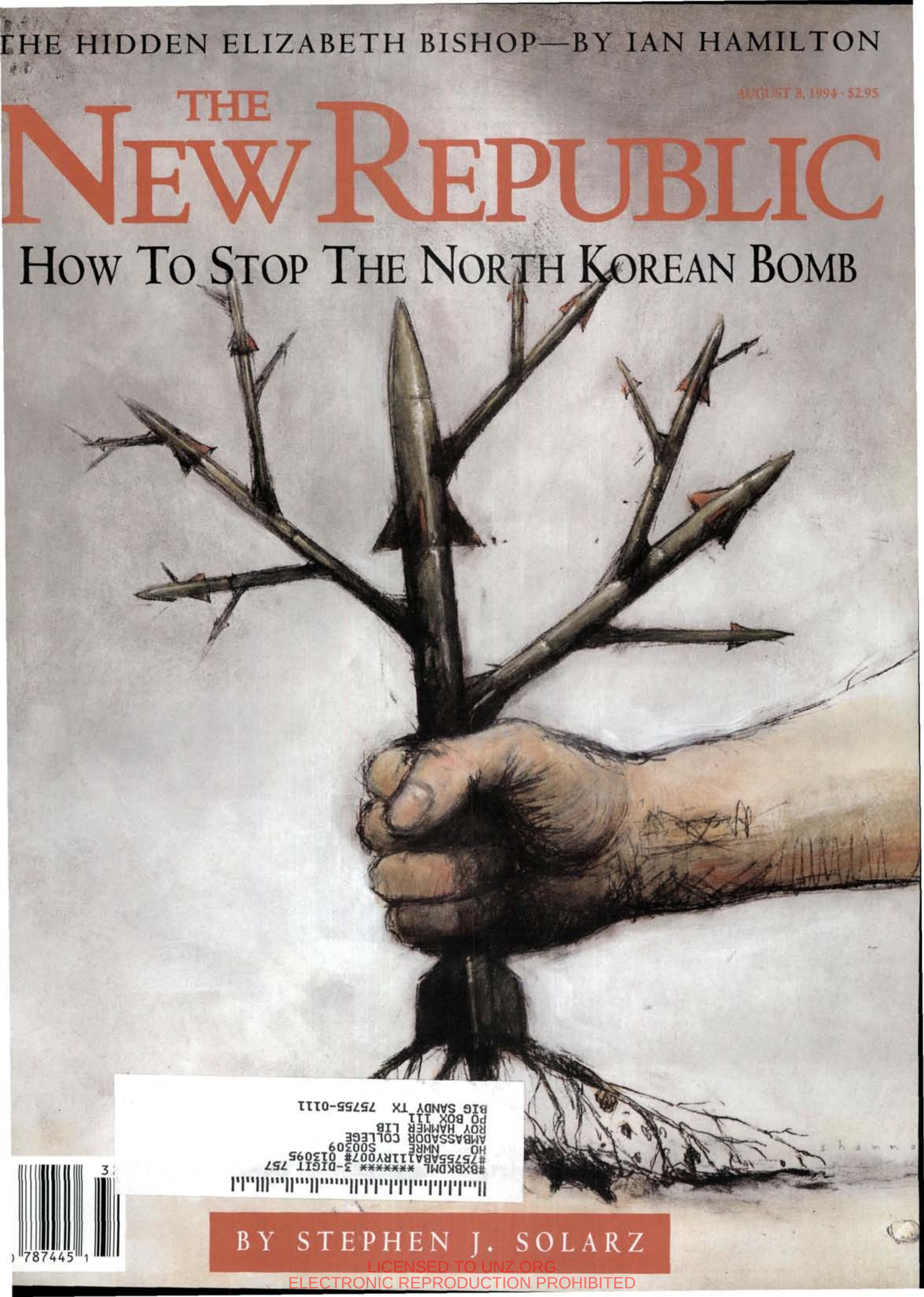

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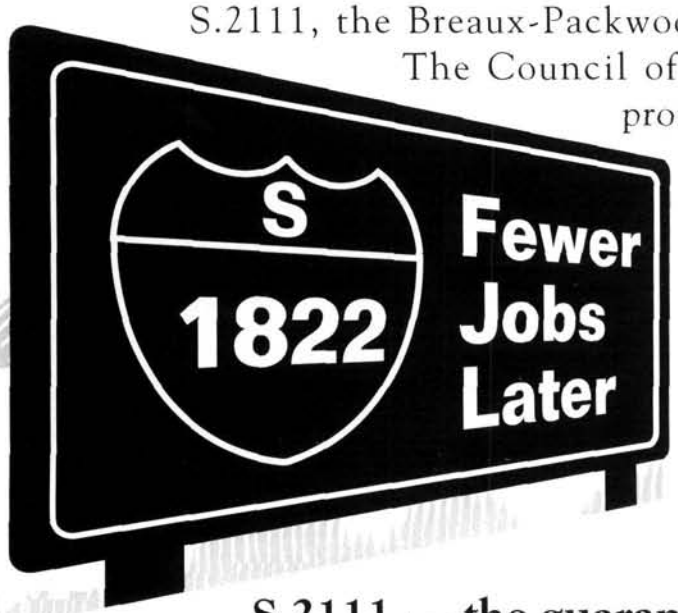

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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AUGUST 8, 1994

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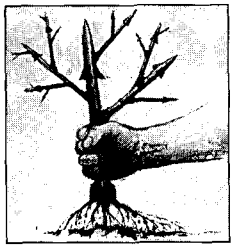

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CORRESPONDENCE

Our Cup runneth over

To the editors:
Fred Barnes ("No Kicks," July 4), like Michael Fay, needs special treatment—he wants the rules changed because he has an attention disorder. Football and its fans don't care whether Fred or the U.S.A. are bored by it. I find the whole discussion of this country's "problem" with the game tiresome. Millions worldwide are still passionate about it, whether it is miserably dull (Nick Hornby's Arsenal) or unbearably exciting (Arsenal, sometimes). I suppose Fred's grievance about defensive play was vindicated during the World Cup by the demise of the stellar Colombians at the hands of the U.S.A. However, I have yet to hear any criticism of U.S. coach Bora Milutinovic's tactics, and rightly so.

TOM YARKER
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
I realize Fred Barnes cultivates a certain philistinism as part of his provocative, tough-talk image, but I am heavy-bored with condescending American commentary on soccer. It is a sport based on what Yeats referred to in poetry as "the fascination with what's difficult," and if Americans don't get it, well, so what? They don't much get art of any sort; at least they fund it at a lower level than any other industrial nation. Perhaps it is the American concentration span that needs modification, not the game of soccer.

MICHAEL JENNINGS
Marietta, New York

To the editors:
Please tell Fred Barnes that he is going to have to stop trying to prove his silly points by making references to his 9-year-old son, Freddy, and said offspring's experiences. Oh, and he did also refer to his own high school soccer experiences. I remember U.S. soccer in those days: lots of kicks aimed at the ankles of opposing players, kicking the ball in when it went out of bounds and lots of yelling on the field. That was also when U.S. soccer was (quite rightly) an international joke.

ALAN POSNER
East Lansing, Michigan

To the editors:
In his essay "Victory" (July 4), Friedrich Christian Delius goes too far in linking the problem of German nationalism with German soccer. He argues—and rightly so—that Germans have been slow to apply the principles of democracy against neo-Nazis and a resurging nationalism. The implication is that if Germans say they are against racism, and for principles such as equality and fairness, they ought to seriously address egregious violations of those principles. In other words, Germany should act according to principle.

But by concluding that the German soccer team should not win the 1994 World Cup for its own and the world's good, Delius himself takes an unprincipled stance. Soccer, like many sports, is a game with universally accepted rules premised on notions of equality and fairness. A winner should be congratulated and duly recognized for its ability to outperform other national teams under mutually accepted rules. To treat a German victory otherwise would be unfair.

W. MING SHAO
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Boring

To the editors:
After criticizing political consultants who advised President Clinton that a significant deficit-reduction program wasn't in the best interest of his re-election prospects, Mickey Kaus ("Flopulists," TRB, July 4) argues that deficit reduction is important because its "purpose was to avert long-term economic decline by stopping the government from soaking up savings that could otherwise be used by the private sector to boost future productivity."

I hate to drag your readers into boring economic arguments, but the above is based on assumptions that there is a scarcity of investment funds in the financial markets; that these funds are being competed for by the private and the public sectors; and that this competition drives up interest rates. However, this scenario, which is standard in many college economics textbooks to illustrate the consequences of running budget deficits, almost never happens in the real world. The reason? Given the globalization of financial markets, most industrialized nations have access to foreign funds to finance budget deficits. This access brings foreign funds to domestic financial markets, which solves the problems of scarcity, the competition between the private and the public sectors and a rise in interest rates. Your readers may recall that budget deficits became the norm during the Reagan years, but interest rates remained very low.

ABDUL ABDI
College Park, Maryland

Ball bearings

To the editors:
Jacob Heilbrunn's reflections on George W. Ball ("Spurious George," July 4) recall for me a discussion Ball and I had on the QE II on July 5, 1976. As we were about to meet, I had heard news reports on the ship's radio of Israel's astonishing rescue at Entebbe of imprisoned airline passengers. I told Ball what had happened (he had not heard the reports) when we first sat down. He grimaced, shook his head unhappily and said, "That will rent the international fabric." He then changed the subject.

Ball's hostile writings about Israel came as no surprise.

FLOYD ABRAMS
New York, New York

To the editors:
Jacob Heilbrunn's diatribe against the late (always making it easier) George Ball included a comment of Ball's, which I summarize: that Jews are a mobilized American ethnic group that deprived the United States of freedom of diplomatic action on issues that deeply affect its national interests, that no action touching Israel's interests can be taken, or even discussed, within the executive branch without it being quickly known to the Israeli government. So? Whether or not that comment is an example, politically incorrect, for sure, of anti-Semitism (I'm thinking not), it is an irrefutable fact. The Jewish lobby is legendary in this country, and it is, indeed, highly mobilized, very protective of Israel and very, very well-situated. What lobby in this county has more political clout, is more mobilized, more well-situated than AIPAC?

DONALD DAVITT
Prescott, Arizona

Fudging

To the editors:
It is interesting to see how a Clinton apologist like Michael Kinsley makes an analogy between the President's evasion of military service and Ronald Reagan's experience in World War II (TRB, "Dodge-Dodger," June 20). Of course neither man wore his country's uniform, but it's been reported that a young Bill Clinton used the phrase "I loathe the military" during the Vietnam War. This blanket sentiment is a far cry from opting to narrate Army films, or even taking a principled stand against a specific war.

A broader issue is the implication that a person may be absolved from avoiding military service on the grounds that a war is "unpopular." Sure, the common

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view is that World War II was a "good war" and Vietnam was "wrong," but during the 1950s-'60s at least four presidents (both parties) decided that it was in our national interest to take action in Southeast Asia. It is sophistry (not to mention 20/20 hindsight) to suggest that because Clinton was "right," or "doing what many others did" about the Vietnam draft, his behavior is somehow pardonable. This argument neglects the fundamental fact that when our country's elected officials called, he fudged.

DAVID WEISS
Westfield, New Jersey

To the editors:
As a Vietnam veteran I read with interest Michael Kinsley's gratuitous slap at President Reagan because of the nature of his military service in World War II. President Reagan wore the military uniform and put his talents and aptitudes at the disposal of his country as it saw fit. He did not engage, as did President Clinton, in various forms of chicanery to avoid military service and in demonstrations that abetted the cause of his country's enemies.

Kinsley is kind enough to award those of us who served in Vietnam "all due honor" but then says that "any American who participated in the nonviolent protests that helped to end the killing and dying (in Cambodia? in the reeducation camps? among the boat people on the South China Sea?) in that war can be proud of his or her "record." And they wonder why Vietnam veterans are angry.

BERNARD A. HEENEY
Bayonne, New Jersey

High-tech abattoir

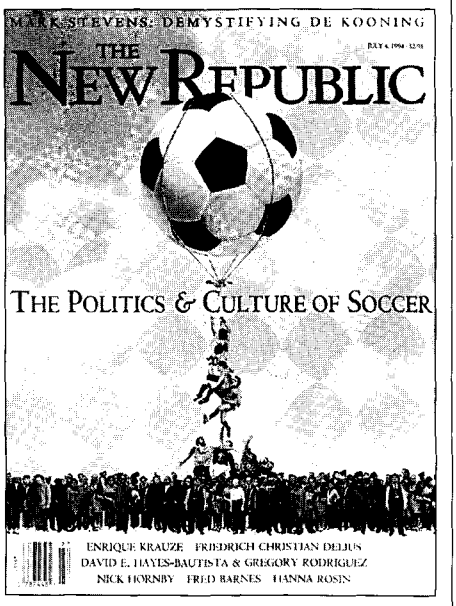
To the editors:
Robert Wright is onto something—or maybe just on something ("Low Fiber," June 27). Sure, let's levy a hefty tax on fiber data consumers. And then let's slap, say, a fifty cents per issue tax on subscribers to THE NEW REPUBLIC in all its proliferating electronic, syndicated and hard forms. There are surely more TNR readers in Hyde Park than in Robert Taylor Homes, so who can argue with the motives? By the way, because the costs of fiber are so high in rural areas, this market would best be served by wireless data transmission. That will, of course, be hamstrung by the wonderfully anachronistic FCC.

No, instructing government to equalize and put to good use the info technologies coming down the cyberpike is a dead end. At best, it will turn Wright's cash cow into a mutant five-legged calf. The worst case is a high-tech abattoir manned by zero-sum zealots eager to apply a sledgehammer to the brain cases of high-end users.

JEFF A. TAYLOR
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Deluded

To the editors:
Michael Lewis's whiny screed ("Potus Operandi," June 27) inspired contempt rather than pity. Millions of us manage to make our own travel arrangements, including booking flights, reading train tables and, miracle of miracles, figuring out how to get to a train station when alternate transportation fails. Were we supposed to feel sorry for these journalists? The reporters who cover the president seem to be suffering from a more acute case of deluded self-importance than does the White House staff Lewis criticizes.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Ithaca, New York

Twaddle

To the editors:
In his review of the Eagleton/Jarman screenplay of the film *Wittgenstein* ("Soul on Fire," June 20), Colin McGinn expresses amazement and evident displeasure than no "philosopher" was consulted in constructing the film. Unlike the portentous profundities and gnomic pronouncements which (in his view) litter the screenplay, genuine philosophical discourse consists in argument, counterargument, clarification, detail, etc. We must ask ourselves, if this is indeed the case, why McGinn's own review is strewn with remarks like "What links Wittgenstein's philosophies is a deep ambivalence about language," or "The learner of language needs more than verbal explanation if he is to latch onto what is meant, since no word is self-interpreting." The first is mere twaddle, the second might be better expressed as "Words often refer to things." A more honest philosophical mind might have put the entire issue more simply: "Wittgenstein was an interesting human being, but philosophical problems are not, primarily, language problems. Ergo, Wittgenstein is not an important philosopher."

There has been a conspiracy underfoot for half a century and more on the part of academic philosophers to obscure the contributions of the great thinkers of Wittgenstein's time—Benedetto Croce, Gabriel Marcel, Max Scheler, Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, Kitaro Nishida, Jose Ortega y Gasset to name a few—to our understanding of life, value and history. This loss of nerve and insight may be attributed, I think, to a comprehensive failure to maintain the distinction established by Hegel between genuine logic and formal logic. Formal logic is the stuff of mathematics, certainty and academic tenure. Genuine logic is the stuff of living, grappling, understanding and growing. And also, I might add, of philosophy itself. McGinn's review highlights the distinction, insofar as his critique of Wittgenstein's views meanders through a variety of vacuous observations and conjectures about meaning, false analogies and "seeing what is before our eyes," any and all of which would have made Remy de Gourmont blush, without telling us anything of value or interest about life, whereas the film in question effectively conveys the honesty and the yearning for transcendence which, though it remained unfulfilled, is the cardinal virtue of Wittgenstein's life and work.

JOHN TOREN
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Invisible

To the editors:
I have subscribed to TNR since about 1962. The magazine, changed in many ways, has not changed its position on women since then. They remain invisible! No other journal in the country is as bad as TNR on women's issues. And no other thinks Camille Paglia is someone to speak on these. I am delighted you have come out—finally—on gay issues. But did you know that women can be gay, too—and that gays are not all rich, bourgeois Easterners?

CAROL NEELY
Champaign, Illinois

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FROM WASHINGTON

Cynics' lesson

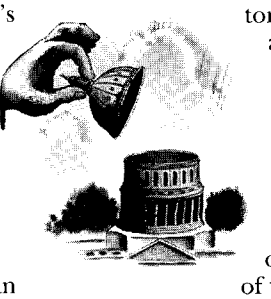
Why don't more Americans appreciate Bill Clinton? Because of Cynicism, the enemy within. The president sounded the alarm upon his return from the Normandy battlefield: "When I saw all those rows of crosses, it occurred to me that those people did not die so the American people could indulge themselves in the luxury of cynicism." Clinton says he "is seriously dealing with crime, with welfare reform, with health care for the first time in decades," but that voters don't believe it because of "negative" press reports.

I confess. I am a member of the press and I am a cynic when it comes to Clinton. I am especially cynical about Clinton's attacks on cynicism. Should I seek twelve-step rehabilitation? Or is cynicism justified? In search of an answer, I have subjected myself to a painful diagnostic test: I have read Clinton's entire welfare reform plan. After health care, this is his most significant domestic initiative. Does it (as he claims) "seriously deal" with the problem, or is it (as cynics suspect) riddled with loopholes to protect entrenched Washington lobbies?

Welfare reform offers a particularly good test because Clinton has issued a clear, bold promise against which his plan can be measured. He has declared that after two years on the dole, "anyone who can work, must work—in the private sector if possible, in a temporary subsidized job if necessary." At the same time, there are powerful forces within his party that can be expected to try to undermine this pledge: liberals who see work requirements as "slavefare," government unions that worry about low-paid welfare recipients being assigned to jobs union members would otherwise perform. One approaches the fine print of Clinton's plan with some trepidation. Two years and go to work? There must be a catch somewhere.

Sure enough, the sections of the Clinton bill that describe his two-year time limit contain more than a few escape hatches. The two-year clock doesn't start ticking, it turns out, until age 18 (so an unmarried 16-year-old who has a child is guaranteed four years on the dole). The clock doesn't tick for any month in which a recipient works part-time. It doesn't tick if a recipient gets a note from a doctor. It doesn't tick for a year after a mother has her first child. On top of all this, states can excuse up to 10 percent of the caseload for "good cause" (e.g., "serious emotional instability"). Another 10 percent can get "extensions" to pursue various educational opportunities.

It would be unusual for a welfare mother not to qualify for at least one of these loopholes. Clinton's "two-year" limit isn't necessarily a limit that will be reached in two years. But neither is it a limit that will never be reached. As welfare loopholes go, Clinton's are actually pretty modest. (The leading Republican alternative has similar exceptions.) The vast majority of long-term recipients in a Clinton regime will eventually "hit the wall." But what happens then?



To hear Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala tell it, what happens is simple: "If the time limit is reached, welfare ends, and people are expected to work." They will be offered day care, and private or public jobs in a new program called WORK. After that, they will get paychecks "for hours worked," not welfare checks.

Shalala makes a point of contrasting this "work-for-wages" system with traditional "workfare," in which a recipient keeps on getting a welfare check while the government tries to "sanction" her—take the check away—if she doesn't "work it off." As Shalala notes, it is "time-consuming, difficult and bureaucratic to sanction someone." That is because the Supreme Court requires fairly elaborate procedures (including a hearing with lawyers) before even part of a welfare check can be taken away. The Clinton plan, Shalala claims, avoids this mess. "If you don't work, you don't get paid."

Alas, not quite. The Clintonites appear to have gotten cold feet about a pure work-for-wages scheme. Instead, what will happen once a recipient reaches the time limit is this: she will get a WORK assignment, and her check will be reduced—but not necessarily eliminated—in anticipation of the wages she will earn. If she doesn't show up for her WORK job, her supervisor will notify the welfare department, which will call her in for, yes, "sanctioning." Perversely (depending on how much her check has been reduced), she may actually benefit from the "sanction," which, initially, is only a loss of 50 percent of her former full welfare benefits. Not until her third refusal to work does she face the possibility of losing her entire check.

Doesn't that sound, well, a bit "time-consuming, difficult and bureaucratic"? With each stage of "sanctioning" in Clinton's plan comes a new quasi-judicial hearing and a new opportunity for the recipient to get a legal-aid lawyer who will appeal any penalty all the way to Justice Breyer. Is this fanciful? Even the 1988 welfare reform law, with its mild requirements and penalties, has been hobbled by litigation. In Milwaukee, for example, there are about 2,500 welfare recipients meeting their obligations—but there are another 2,500 recipients stuck in various stages of "sanctioning."

That's one catch in the Clinton plan. There is another. In any public-service jobs program, wages must be kept low to preserve the incentive for workers to look for private-sector jobs. But the fine print of Clinton's plan requires that WORK workers be paid the same wage as others doing "the same type of work." Does Clinton want to put welfare recipients to work at useful, visible tasks like cleaning up parks? If so, under this provision he'll have to pay them a lot more than many could earn in the private sector. In Washington, D.C., for example, entry-level park workers currently make $7.56 an hour.

Clinton officials admit that the "same wage" requirement will prevent them from placing welfare recipients in jobs that unionized municipal workers are already doing. Unfortunately, those are the most useful jobs. With this one concession to the unions, the Clintonites took a giant step in the direction of make-work. It's worth remembering that in 1939 when unions struck against the Works Progress Administration over a similar "prevailing wage" issue, Franklin Roosevelt broke the strike. Try to imagine Clinton doing that.

The grim details of Clinton's welfare plan are, I admit, not nearly as grim as they might be. The plan has many small loopholes, but no black holes. Even the pro-union clauses could be worse. (The national service law passed last year gives unions an explicit job-by-job veto). Taken as a whole, Clinton's bill is a more serious attempt to grapple with the welfare problem than anything any previous president has proposed. I hereby resolve to be less cynical about Clinton in the future. Except when he says, "There is no reason for cynicism."

MICKEY KAUS

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 8, 1994

NONCENTS

Last week the Treasury Department finally unveiled the new $100 bill. Crowded with novel doodads (watermarks, color-changing ink, iridescent disks), the next generation of Franklins will be tougher to counterfeit than the current one. It's about time. Greenbacks, it is well-known, are ridiculously easy to fake. Last year the Secret Service confiscated more than $120 million worth of phony bills overseas and $44 million inside the United States, according to *The New York Times*. One-half of 1 percent of U.S. bills floating around today are thought to be fakes. The government was slow to take the hint. Unlike most European currency, which is redesigned every few years, U.S. paper hasn't been overhauled since 1929. Back then intricate hand engraving was complex enough to thwart most counterfeiters. But the antique bills aren't much of a challenge for today's high-resolution color photocopiers. Indeed, it's possible to make a surprisingly good likeness of your favorite late president at the corner copy shop. (Do not try this, though. It is very, very illegal.) The Treasury plans to release the new hundreds in 1996; the other bills will follow by 2000. But why stop there? As long as they're shelving Jurassic currency anyway, now is the perfect time to retire at least two other pocketbook relics.

Begin with the penny. O.K., you've heard this one before. Anti-penny legislation comes and goes with the seasons. A few years ago the vending machine lobby, calling itself the Coin Coalition, tried to abolish them. And various other attempts have been mounted over the last decade, without luck. But why not just do it already? Pennies are no longer just an anachronism. They're a nuisance. As currency, they're utterly worthless. It's even considered bad form not to pick out the pennies when leaving change as a tip.

Public sentiment is clearly against the penny. Instead of lugging them around, a vast number of Americans routinely toss their daily accumulation in the junk drawer or hoard them in old mayonnaise jars. Others (including at least two TNR editors) indulge in the distasteful practice of conspicuously throwing pennies away. In fact, so many people have so many pennies hanging around the house that there is now an acute national penny shortage. The Treasury has issued a desperate plea to America to release the little buggers back into the wild. As an incentive, banks around the country are offering as much as $1.10 per hundred to get them back.

Of course, those who deny the sublime logic of penny annihilation fall back on the dubious argument that it essentially would result in a regressive tax on the poor, since everything will have to be rounded to the nearest nickel, and retailers, they claim, will inevitably round up. Maybe some will, but the prospect of stores running "We Round Down!" campaigns to drum up business is not inconceivable, either.

Ridding our pockets of penny clutter would leave room for another, wiser replacement: a dollar coin. Yes, the 1979 Susan B. Anthony dollar was a bust, but only because it looked and felt for all the world like a quarter. Why not replace it with a thick, hearty disc like the British pound? It would be a lot more convenient than the flimsy paper version. Twenty-five years ago the dollar was worthy of a bill. Now it's worth about as much as a quarter was then. Fragile paper is no longer up to the job. With a dollar coin, using parking meters and public transportation would become single-token, walletless transactions. The soft drink machine would never again spit out that last, frayed bill. Street musicians could perform uninterrupted on gusty autumn days. What's more, a dollar coin may actually save money. The average life of the overworked dollar bill is a scant eighteen months. The average coin hops pocket to pocket for more than twenty years. Various estimates put the savings at upward of $100 million. There could even be a national referendum on whose visage should appear on the new coin. And there's still plenty of time to hammer out a prototype coin before the new bills are scheduled to hit the streets. By the beginning of the next millennium, we could all have dollars clinking majestically in our pockets and every one of us would be penniless. It would be a perfect world. •

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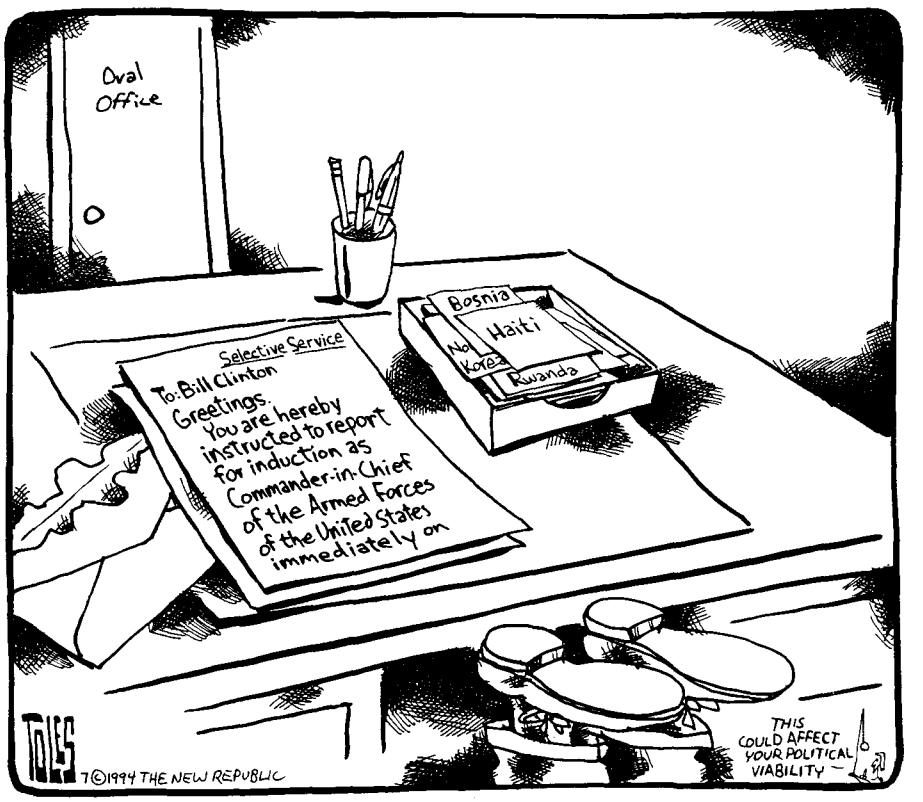
NOTEBOOK

BETTER LATE THAN LATER: Since April the rivers of Rwanda have been rivers of blood. The blood has been mostly the blood of Tutsis. The terror visited on these people is not a natural disaster: it is a political program, an expression of government policy, an expression, that is, of the Hutu determination to exterminate their long-time ethnic rivals. Whenever and wherever it was truly needed during these last months, the U.N. walked away, suspending even the supply of food and medicines to refugees. And while the massacres were being carried out, Western governments wrung their hands. Among the most exercised hand-wringers was our own government, which seems to believe, about Rwanda, too, that gestures save lives. Finally, on July 15, the United States "acted." The president announced that we were suspending diplomatic relations with the government of Rwanda: "The United States cannot allow representatives of a regime that supports genocidal massacre to remain on our soil." The problem with Clinton's expulsion is that the cruel government whose representatives he was expelling no longer existed. It had fallen apart and deserted the capital. The tides of war had shifted, and the Hutus were in flight. The Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Liberation Front was "liberating" the country. Liberation, of course, usually comes with murder.



RIOT RELIEF: On July 17 at least 400 Palestinians from Gaza stormed the checkpoints with Israel in an effort to get in the country. But unlike those 20,000 other Gazans who were being processed in an orderly if tedious manner, the rioters had no work permits to allow them across the frontier. This was the second time in less than a week that such a mob had rioted. Of course, the rioters said they wanted to get work in Israel. They also knew that they couldn't, least of all through such an act of force. No more than any other country, but with far greater justification, was Israel about to let in hundreds of stray illegals just because they had succeeded in getting past their own sentries. It's not clear who mobilized these throngs. What is clear, however, is that their purpose was not to get jobs at all. It was to provoke exactly what was provoked, which is to say, violence. Two Palestinians were killed and about 100 Israelis and Palestinians wounded. *The New York Times* reports that as many as 150 Israeli buses, there to carry Palestinians with permits to their jobs, were torched. The two big players in the Gazan game see themselves as winners: the Islamic extremists of Hamas point to these incidents as signs that the peace negotiations have brought Palestinians little relief; the PLO thinks that such disorder will induce Israel to make ever greater concessions. Yasir Arafat routinely blames Israel for the extremities in the territories. "Israel has destroyed the infrastructure of Gaza," he has charged, as if there were an infrastructure there before 1967. The Palestinians wanted a divorce from Israel. They now have it. But the divorce does not come with alimony or obligations. Maybe their rich cousins will help.

B.S.: If you think newspapers publish Stone Age blather only in op-eds by soldiers of the religious right, check out the July 17 installment of the comic strip "B.C." In the first panel of the strip, artist Johnny Hart shows a caveman scribbling a message to a pen pal across the ocean: "Is it true that over there, you have freedom of religion?" In the last panel, the caveman gets a response: "Yes—and if the hotshots in the black robes have their way, we'll soon be free of it altogether." Earlier this year, the comic strip "For Better or For Worse" was attacked for featuring a character's homosexuality—a story line that won artist Lynn Johnston a Pulitzer nomination for editorial cartooning. Forty newspapers pulled the strip for the duration of the story, and nineteen canceled the strip altogether. How many papers refused to run Mr. Hart's screed? And how many conservatives are bashing him for politicizing the comics? Not many, we suspect.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE: On July 19 *The Washington Post* informed readers that Franklin Gallahan, owner of Gallahan's Furniture, had been found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. But instead of weeping over their fabric swatches, the paper counseled, customers should take action. "If you've ordered furniture from Gallahan's Furniture in Fredericksburg and put the deposit on a credit card, you're one of the lucky ones." chirped the *Post* in a boxed-out sidebar that ran with the obituary. "Consumers who did not pay ... with a credit card should get to court and file for a refund." •

Another Rush to judgment.

LIMBAUGH'S LIES II

By Joshua Shenk

For Brian Keliher, publisher of *Flush Rush Quarterly*, fact-checking Rush Limbaugh used to be a lonely business. No longer. Since TNR's first stab at the subject (see "Limbaugh's Lies," May 23), the talk show host's spotty record has been exposed by the media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) and tweaked by Garry Trudeau in "Doonesbury." Even President Clinton has gotten into the act, lamenting in a June 24 interview that Limbaugh has "no truth-detector."

If you think Limbaugh is anything but exhilarated by the attention, think again. And if you think he has hired extra researchers, tune in to his T.V. show on any given night. After watching the show for another six weeks, I can report—once again—a slew of uncorrected errors.

On June 1 Limbaugh praised New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's powers of inspiration. Drug busts in the city are up 14 percent since Giuliani's inauguration, Limbaugh said, "not because of a directive. There's been no proclamation from City Hall.... It's just that there's ... renewed vigor in the police department." In fact, as Giuliani is quick to point out, he's doubled the city's permanent police drug units and has reversed a 20-year-old policy that prevented cops on the beat from making drug-related arrests. On the same show Limbaugh dissed Giuliani's predecessor, David Dinkins. He objected to "General" Dinkins's first lecture as a Columbia University professor, which he claimed "was on how Giuliani is doing everything wrong." Dinkins won't start teaching until the fall. He did speak at Columbia in February, but he referred to Giuliani only in passing, saying, "To assist our new mayor is to help our city—we can do no less."

On June 6, ten days after his wedding to Marta Fitzgerald, whom he met through the computer network CompuServe, Limbaugh griped that *The New York Times* reported "that we met on a computer dating service." In fact, the *Times* got it right. "The couple met through the bulletin board CompuServe," the paper wrote on May 30.

On June 8 Limbaugh declared, "This is the first time in the president's presidency that his disapprovals are higher than his approvals." Actually, it's the eighth time—the first was in May 1993. On June 9 he protested "a law that's coming down from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which says if you have a Bible on your desk at work then you are guilty of religious harassment." That very day, EEOC Executive Director Douglas Gallegos, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Courts and Administrative Practice, explicitly declared that having a Bible on your desk is protected speech. On June 15, when Clinton traveled to Missouri to unveil his welfare reform plan, Limbaugh said, "Kansas City per capita now has more people working for government than they have working in the private sector, so it's a perfect place for the president to go." Not even close. Federal, state and local government payrolls total about 45,000 in the Kansas City metropolitan area, while the private sector employs about 800,000 people.

On June 27 Limbaugh fretted about the "major economic crisis" occurring under Clinton's watch. He played a tape of a June 21, 1993, briefing in which Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said a defeat of Clinton's budget package could send interest rates higher and the stock market down. Limbaugh was gleeful: "We got the bill. We got the raised taxes. What happened? Interest rates have gone back up and the stock market has gone back down." In fact, the reverse is true. Both the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the NASDAQ index were higher on June 27 than they were on June 21 last year. And interest rates went through the floor following the budget deal.

On July 5 Limbaugh ran an installment of his "Nutrition for the Mind" series, in which he corrects liberals' errors. He played a tape of Clinton from a June 23 fund-raiser: "The truth is that, in spite of the exploding deficits, Congress actually appropriated slightly less money in the previous twelve years than the [Bush and Reagan] administrations asked for." Limbaugh called the president's statement "brazen" and gave him a score of "100 percent deception" and "100 percent liberal spin." Well, Clinton was right. Statistics compiled by President Bush's Office of Management and Budget in October 1992 show that twelve Reagan and Bush budgets called for a combined $5,309.8 billion in spending; Congress appropriated $5,250.9 billion.

Limbaugh's errors, it seems, have a taxonomy all their own: there are errors of fact, errors of interpretation, errors of exaggeration. The most egregious lies, though, are the ones Limbaugh tells about himself. He insists that he refrains from ad hominem (or ad feminem) attacks, but on June 22 he said Texas Governor Ann Richards "was born needing

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her face ironed," and on June 27 he aired a sketch depicting First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton as a witch. Limbaugh can't even get facts about his own show straight. "I'm not on prime time anywhere, radio or T.V.," he said on June 27. That would come as a surprise to viewers in Dallas, where Limbaugh's T.V. program airs at 9:30 p.m.

Predictably, Limbaugh has responded to such challenges by complaining about a liberal conspiracy: he calls FAIR a "far-left media attack dog group." Empower America Co-Director William Bennett, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* on July 19, argues that "what enrages the left are not the purported 'lies of Limbaugh' but the truth he is telling." Yet that doesn't explain why Limbaugh hasn't conceded his mistakes. While Limbaugh claims to correct his errors as soon as they come to his attention, I've never seen it. I have, however, seen him compound his errors by lying further. Called on his assertion that Congress didn't support the Gulf war, he responded on July 5, "It was true when I said it." He said it on April 18, 1994—three years after the House and Senate passed resolutions supporting the war.

Then there is the case of conservative journalist Cliff Kincaid. When Kincaid's name came up on Limbaugh's radio show last November, Limbaugh pitched a fit: "Cliff Kincaid sacrificed ... any pretense to accuracy some time ago. I mean, he's written all kinds of pieces about how I don't go make speeches for free—for the cause.... He's just one more of these little gnats out there trying to sink a Boeing 747 that's leaving him in a cloud of dust." Kincaid, in fact, had *praised* Limbaugh's policy of speaking gratis for conservative groups. "He does his bit for conservatives when the movement calls," Kincaid wrote in *Human Events* on July 27, 1991. In five letters and several phone calls since then, Kincaid has asked for a retraction. At press time, he was still waiting. •

The obstacles to peace in Syria.

WAITING FOR ASSAD

By Peter W. Rodman

For the past three years the world has been expecting an imminent breakthrough in the talks between Syria and Israel—yet they have dragged on. Even with new pressure placed on Syria by Israel's rapprochement with Jordan, the negotiations seem strangely immobilized. Why? Because the impasse may be deeper than many assume.

To be sure, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad is in a tough position. Orphaned by the collapse of his Soviet patron, bereft of a military option, he has no good alternative to peacemaking. With its brand of leftist radicalism becoming a historical anachronism, Syria stands diminished in the Arab world. Since Israel reached an accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization, Syria has lost its leverage over the Palestinian issue. Assad now prepares his people for a "peace of the brave" and yearns for a relationship with the West.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's calculation, meanwhile, is that an agreement with Syria will solve his nation's historic security problem: at peace with Egypt, Syria, Jordan and (inevitably) Lebanon, Israel will be militarily secure enough in its neighborhood to manage the risks of the undoubtedly messy Palestinian settlement. Rabin's Labor government, therefore, hints openly at meeting Syria's essential demand: that Israel relinquish sovereignty over the entire Golan Heights. Even with all the quid pro quos the Israelis will seek—full peace, normalized relations and security safeguards—this is a dramatic change in Israel's position.

Yet despite the political commitment on both sides, the hard realities of this negotiation have become apparent. Israel's price for surrendering the Golan is very high, including many demands that, if met, would be seen by Arabs as humiliating to Syria. Israel wants full diplomatic and economic relations with Syria, including open borders and tourism. It wants shared control of the Golan's waters, which flow into the Sea of Galilee. It wants extensive demilitarization of the Golan after its withdrawal, as well as other disarmament provisions to nullify the Syrian advantage created by Israel's relinquishing of the high ground. And Israel wants some early-warning intelligence presence to remain on the Heights while its withdrawal is phased over a lengthy period—perhaps eight years.

There's more. For Syria, peace will include other significant political costs. Israel will surely insist that Syria crack down on Palestinian terrorism and disarm and neutralize Hezbollah in Lebanon. Politically, this may not be as easy for Assad as many believe. News sources report that Hezbollah is moving its military and intelligence operations underground. A confrontation with Hezbollah will risk Syria's relationship with Iran, a major component of its foreign policy, providing valuable leverage over Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Arabs. Syria's support for terrorism, of course, has been a valuable means of intimidating its Arab brothers.

With peace, in other words, Syria will no longer be able to play its Palestinian card, or its terrorism card, and it risks its Iranian card—the very things on which it has always relied to serve its leadership ambitions in the Arab world. With peace, Syria is an ordinary country. This poses an agonizing dilemma for an ideological regime dominated by an ethnic minority that sits atop a powder keg of internal divisions. Syria's national goals (recovery of the Golan) pull it one way; its pan-Arab aspirations pull it another way. The risks may not be so easy for Assad to calculate.

U.S. policymakers, perceiving all this, have assumed that a close relationship with Washington is an added inducement. That's why President Clinton met Assad

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earlier this year in Geneva. Yet the geopolitical content of this relationship is not clear. Assad has met U.S. presidents before; he is not likely to trade away important chips for the thrill of adding new White House photos to his collection. For the United States to supply arms to Syria, replacing the Soviets, is out of the question; so is a significant easing of technology-transfer restrictions, which would be dangerous. We have been tempted to wink at Syria's hegemony over Lebanon, which would be dishonorable. The U.S.-Syrian strategic relationship, on examination, looks as hollow as the Israeli-Syrian relationship for which it is supposed to substitute.

It is no surprise, therefore, that a large gap remains between Israel and Syria, and also that a certain nervousness has arisen about U.S. strategy. Some of this nervousness is reflected in a growing debate over whether U.S. personnel should be sent to the Golan to help police a settlement. The debate is premature: the merits of a U.S. presence will become clearer as the talks progress—when we find out (*a*) if the parties want it, and (*b*) what "it" is, since there are many possible forms such a presence could take, ranging from a surveillance or tripwire function to a major military force, each with its pros and cons. One basic principle *is* certain: an agreement must rest primarily on its own internal balance and safeguards; it should never rely on U.S. personnel to prop up an otherwise precarious arrangement.

As Secretary of State Warren Christopher travels to the Middle East to relaunch the Syrian negotiation, the United States needs a balanced strategy. Christopher's mission is well worth the effort: Assad cannot be left out of a comprehensive peace, and a deal with Syria will indeed transform Israel's strategic position. With the Palestinian issue defused, such an agreement will hasten the emergence of a U.S.-Arab-Israeli coalition in the face of new strategic dangers coming from Iran and Islamic radicalism.

At the same time, we must show some patience. The Syrian-Israeli relationship may need to evolve a little further before the sides are psychologically ready for the leap required. We must also impose some discipline. We should not chase after Assad, as we seemed to be doing in Geneva. A Syrian-Israeli agreement ought to mean more to him than it does to us. Nor should we be intimidated. Syria's ability to disrupt the other negotiations is now significantly reduced; a failure of the Syrian-Israeli negotiation would leave Syria isolated. The United States should not approach the problem with the attitude that Assad holds most of the cards. He doesn't. Nothing should be given away for free—not by the Americans, not by the Israelis.

Assad's ultimate choice will depend on many factors, but most of all on the balance of forces—on the solidarity of the Arab moderates and the credibility of U.S. power in the area (vis-à-vis Iraq and Iran, for example). This is where our main responsibility lies. The United States must remain a formidable power across the globe and in the region, meaning we must reverse our dangerous defense budget cutbacks and perform more impressively than heretofore when challenged to use our military might. The disincentives for disruptive policies need to be evident all over the Middle East. It is in this respect above all, and not only on the technical skills of our negotiators, that Assad will be judging the American role, and his interest in a deal.

PETER W. RODMAN is director of Middle East Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a senior editor of *National Review.*

BELFAST POSTCARD

THE BEST MEDICINE

By Jonathan Stevenson

Milton Friedman would have to smile. Lawlessness in Northern Ireland has increased the demand for a good product, and the market has responded admirably. Civilian casualties continue from paramilitary shootings and bombings, of which there have been about 15,000 since 1969. And on April 26, after British authorities uncovered an Irish Republican Army drug network, the Provos demonstrated their virtual control of Catholic Belfast by "kneecapping" sixteen alleged drug dealers—an all-time record for one night. Kneecapping, whereby the victim is typically shot in the thighbone or shinbone and not the kneecap itself, is not usually fatal. So the good news in Belfast is the state of the healing art.

Just as the creation of nuclear missiles brought us Teflon, twenty-five years of bloody conflict have resulted in high-quality medical care, the envy of physicians everywhere. "The staff at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, have had the misfortune to acquire exceptional experience in dealing with the casualties of urban guerrilla violence," says the preface to *Surgery of Violence,* a collection of papers by Belfast doctors published in the late '70s by the *British Medical Journal.*

Bone specialists around the world draw on the expertise of Ulster's clinicians. On April 26, after treating two grisly kneecappings, Gerry McCoy, an orthopedic surgeon at the Royal Victoria, went straight to Sarajevo. In the course of a week, in the heavily shelled State Hospital, Mr. McCoy (surgeons are honored with "Mr." in the U.K.) operated on eight ravaged limbs and consulted on dozens of other cases. He will return to Sarajevo for two weeks in October. The Royal Victoria has a fellowship program for South African and Australian doctors, who have taken medical lessons back home. Meanwhile, over the past year charge nurse John Williams of Belfast City Hospital has spoken on emergency procedures at

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conferences in Singapore and Australia, as well as several in England. Later this year he'll lecture in Indonesia, applying the lessons he has learned to the victims of traffic accidents. Next year he will talk in Nashville. Although U.S. gunshot victims far outnumber those in Belfast, strafings and bomb blasts in Northern Ireland have spawned innovations in treating simultaneous casualties that intrigue even jaded American doctors.

At this point Northern Irish doctors and nurses can work near-miracles. Many a car thief left shot in an alley walks with no limp. Most patients can put weight on the injured leg three days after being shot, are discharged from the hospital within a week and recover fully, Mr. McCoy says. Victims of shootings are usually hospitalized within thirty minutes. Triage techniques and surgical consulting procedures are singularly efficient. Consequently, only two punishment-shooting victims out of more than 2,000 have bled to death, and only a handful have lost limbs.

The technique Belfast surgeons have perfected is known as "the locking-nail procedure." During the operation, a nail about a foot long is inserted longitudinally into the marrow of each segment of the severed bone and is secured with three screws, holding the two pieces together like a wire between cylindrical beads. After two years the bone heals completely and the nail is removed. Although the procedure has been used for more than twenty years, "it used to take a half to three-quarters of an hour to put in the three screws," Mr. McCoy says. "Here in Belfast, it's down to three minutes." Thanks to their unequaled experience with bony bullet trauma, Ulster surgeons are able to center the lower screws free-hand, where other doctors would have to use awkward, time-consuming, tool-assisted methods.

Other kinds of doctors face challenges, too—anesthesiologists, for example. "A lot of kneecapped boys are tanked up before they come in," says Lawrence Rocke, a consultant in accident and emergency medicine at the Royal Victoria. "It's sort of a natural prophylaxis that gives them Dutch courage." Liquor also artificially raises blood pressure, increases the likelihood of vomiting and makes the depressant effect of the anesthetic trickier to determine and control. "If anesthesiologists didn't know how to deal with drunkenness," says Mr. McCoy, "they wouldn't have much work in Belfast." Then there are the bomb-blast victims. During the '70s Ulster dental expert George Blair pioneered the "titanium plate method" of patching together shattered skulls. (Titanium is strong yet easy to cast, and is used in manufacturing supersonic aircraft.) Doctors take a mold of the defective part of the cranium as a dentist would teeth, then use plaster to shape a titanium plate precisely to its contours. Once the precision-crafted plate is screwed flush into the skull, all the patient has to worry about are airport metal detectors and electrical storms.

The demand for medical innovation continues. Twenty-five years ago tarring and feathering was widely favored by the paramilitaries. Now it is passé, so doctors no longer need worry about the burning and tissue damage the practice caused. On the other hand, high-velocity automatic pistols and assault rifles have replaced low-velocity revolvers as the IRA's weapons of choice; correspondingly, gunshot wounds are getting more traumatic. In an IRA attack two years ago a six-week-old girl, Terri-Louise White, caught one Kalashnikov slug in the abdomen and another in the leg as she sat in her uncle's lap. He died immediately, but she was rushed to the Royal Victoria, her leg blown almost clean off. A team of five doctors was assembled in five minutes. Because medical equipment companies do not anticipate babies getting shot with A.K.s, the hospital had no ready-made vein shunts small enough to keep the blood flowing to the infant's thigh. The surgeons improvised with tiny feeding tubes, inaugurating another emergency medical technique. The girl's leg is now fully functional.

It is a "macabre irony," as three Royal Victoria physicians observed in the January 1993 *Journal of Trauma*, that terrorists punish lesser criminals in the name of law and order—and yet some good is coming from it. With the security forces accusing the IRA of drug-dealing, and the Republic of Ireland further disavowing support for the armed struggle, the IRA is strengthening its hand in Catholic neighborhoods by way of punishment shootings. Northern Ireland medicine, it seems, will be on the leading edge for a while.

JONATHAN STEVENSON's book on U.S. involvement in Somalia will be published later this year by the Naval Institute Press.

A history lesson for Disney's America.

PAST IMPERFECT

By Russell Miller

Once upon a time, on a big piece of land in an East Coast state, a developer decided to build a theme park just like America. Its engineers would construct navigable rivers, eateries with nineteenth-century atmosphere and a parking lot for 8,500 cars. They would conjure up simulated Civil War battle grounds, silver mines, deserts and cornfields, then encircle the place with a real steam train, so 5 million visitors per year could relive the American Adventure. The state's governor called the project "the ultimate expression of the effort to dramatize our history." A local politician hailed the "beneficent employer creating additional thousands of jobs." The developer itself promised customers, "You'll see your own youngster

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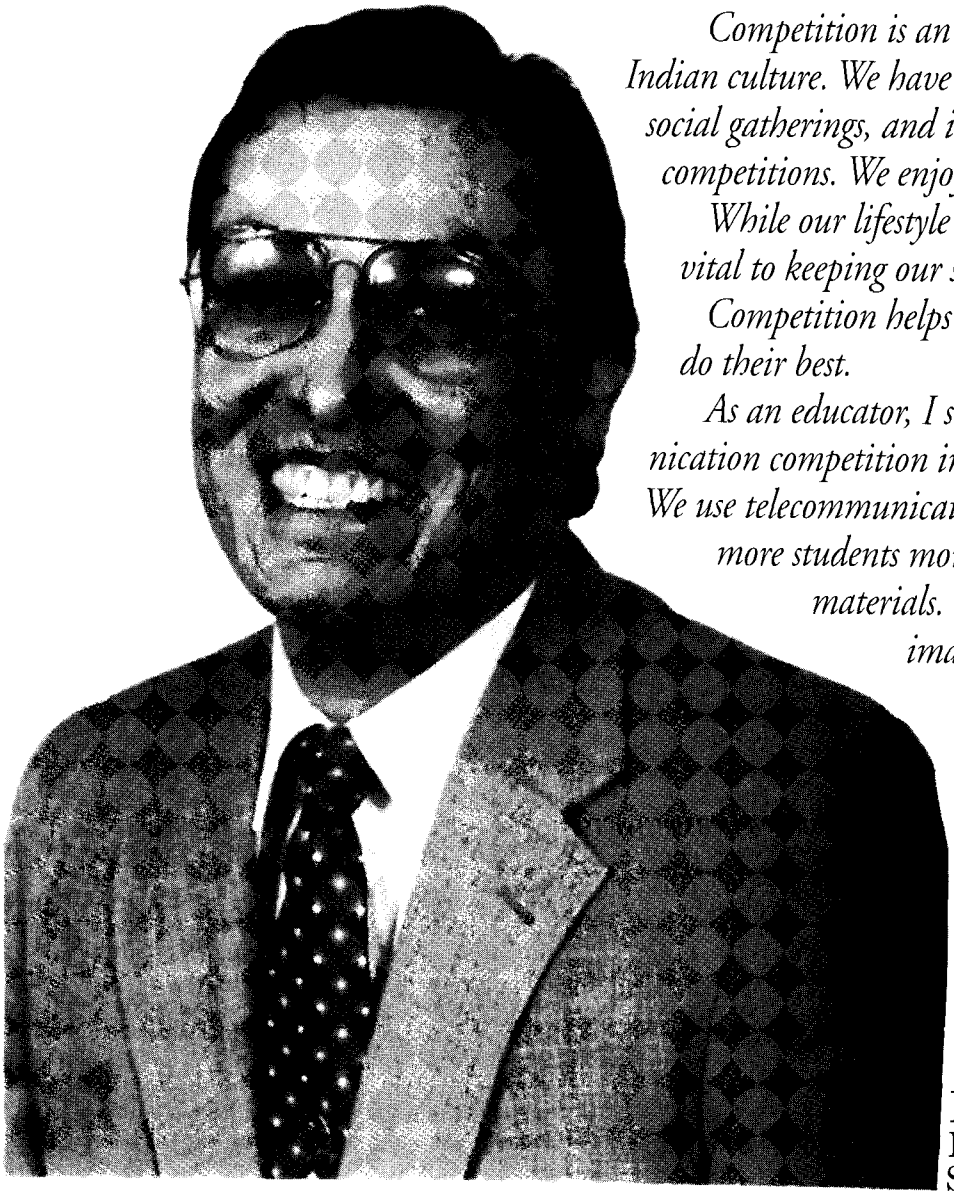
Why we need real competition in long distance—now.



Competition is an integral part of our society and the Indian culture. We have powwows at our celebrations and social gatherings, and include friendly dance and singing competitions. We enjoy and thrive by competing.

While our lifestyle is one of cooperation, competition is vital to keeping our society growing and alive.

Competition helps individuals and groups strive to do their best.

As an educator, I see the positive results of telecommunication competition in innovations in teaching methods. We use telecommunications to enhance education, reach more students more efficiently, and with better materials. We can capture our students' imaginations, bring new ideas to them, and help them grow.

To me, competition in telecommunications is more than just an abstract theory—it means a better life and greater opportunities for all our children. I urge Congress to support full competition in telecommunications—now.

Robert Eaglestaff
Principal, American Indian Heritage School, Seattle, Washington.

Support the Breaux-Packwood bill, S.2111.

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begin to understand for himself the power and depth of his American heritage."

The site was chosen with care, just minutes along speedy highways from a tourist mecca that already drew millions each year. It would be newer, more focused, even bigger than Disneyland. Only it wouldn't be in woodsy Virginia. It would be in the Bronx. And it wouldn't be Disney's anything. It would be Freedomland, eighty-five acres of time, space and glory. The gates opened June 19, 1960.

Disney Chairman Michael Eisner isn't the first person to try to sell a theme park as "an entertaining, enlightening and educational portrayal of history." Freedomland, *Life* magazine wrote in 1960, was "the latest, largest and most elaborate" of a spate of parks that aimed to duplicate the success of Disneyland, which had opened in 1955. A generation later, it is all but forgotten. C. Vann Woodward, writing in TNR ("A Mickey Mouse Idea," June 20), can't imagine a park evoking the past without "vulgar condescension." Shelby Foote fears that Disney will "sentimentalize [American history] out of recognition." Freedomland did neither. Its history holds a lesson about what Disney's America could be and should be but probably won't be.

Freedomland was a landscape artist's conception of the United States, a map of the lower forty-eight with little Great Lakes and Rocky Mountains, New England villages and New Mexican deserts. Its cities, Chicago, San Francisco and "Little Old New York," each offered an appropriate regularly scheduled disaster: fire, earthquake, grand larceny. Politics was declaimed by actors on an antebellum street. There were live buffalo on the plains, grapes on the vine, magnolias in New Orleans at Mardi Gras. There was even cultural diversity in a '50s mode—Chinese food from Chun King, Mexican food from Fritos.

A day at Freedomland could demand muscle: rowing a canoe under the guidance of genuine Indians (Cherokees playing Chippewa) or grabbing a hose to help douse the flames that engulfed Chicago every twenty minutes. There could be danger, too. One rainy afternoon, a stagecoach slid off a muddy trail, snapped the spokes of a rear wheel and flipped; a housewife from the Bronx fractured her spine. Freedomland was an open-air theater in which citizens acted out the stories that give citizenship meaning. Concrete and jolly, it sprinkled a vocabulary of places and dates over a coherent, participatory drama.

Historians scorned the place. Daniel J. Boorstin called it a "pseudo-event." "Pseudo-history," huffed Walter Muir Whitehead—and, worse, commercial. But Freedomland was no more "pseudo" than a medieval passion play or an old-time centennial pageant, and it was markedly more honest in its playful artificiality than academically sanctioned "reconstructions" like Colonial Williamsburg. It promised not historical truth but national myth, infused with a spirit of unity, grit and possibility.

That, with slicker tricks, was what I expected from Dis-

Grouseketeers

In Virginia these days, two cartoonish characters with big ears and goofy grins are giving the GOP fits. One is Oliver North; the other, surprisingly, is Mickey Mouse. We all know that plans for Disney's America have angered musty academics and overzealous environmentalists. But the project has also enraged the state's pro-growth Republicans. Cultural conservatives cringe at the thought of turning history over to Hollywood moguls. The country club set sniffs at the prospect of middle-class tourists trampling through their weekend hideaways. Suburbanites fret over the potential of a hellish commute.

Virginia's Republican governor, George Allen, probably didn't anticipate the stir he would cause within his own ranks by courting Disney officials. Most governors pray for a cash cow—a Toyota factory, a sports team—to boost the state economy. Yet while Allen's package of tax breaks for Disney easily passed the legislature in Richmond, park plans haven't won the thunderous GOP applause he expected.

For the gentlemen farmers of Virginia's horse country, the issue might be Allen himself. Old-money Republicans have been suspicious of the governor since he boasted of a fondness for chewing tobacco last year. His enthusiasm for a garish theme park has only confirmed their worst fears. Many well-to-do types have joined with the Piedmont Environmental Council in opposing Disney. An Allen spokesman dismisses them as "a very elite vocal minority" and not the party's political base. Suburbanites, however, are—and those who live near the park's site fear it will cramp their lifestyle. "Republicans who happen to live in Northern Virginia don't like the idea of sitting in traffic for three hours with fifty-foot mouse ears looming over Route 66," says media consultant Mike Murphy.

Other Republicans are scrambling to find an ideologically respectable way to oppose the park without sounding like Democrats. *The Wall Street Journal* has argued that Allen's tax breaks are corporate welfare. So has Mary Matalin, George Bush's deputy campaign manager in 1992, who says Allen's financing of Disney job-training amounts to industrial policy. "I don't like it when government picks winners and losers," she says. Matalin also has personal reasons for opposing the park. She and her husband, James Carville, are "new homeowners in Front Royal.... It's James's first home ever. It's going to be incredibly disruptive."

Then there is the issue of Allen's aiding a company that raised large sums for Bill Clinton in 1992. "Let Michael Eisner pay for it," says William Kristol, chairman of the Project for the Republican Future. "Didn't he get $220 million last year in salary and bonus?" Kristol worries that Disney will rewrite American history in non-Eurocentric, multicultural terms: "If you're going to have a schlocky version of American history, it should at least be a schlocky, patriotic and heroic version. But it won't be. It will be sort of pseudo-sophisticated and politically correct, [with] suitable bows to all oppressed groups."

Perhaps. Yet none of this GOP nattering is likely to quash Disney's plans. As for Allen, his stand on the park looks, at best, like a trade-off. "On the minus side, its going to alienate a lot of his supporters," Murphy says. "On the plus side, he and his family will probably get free tickets to Space Mountain."

ELLEN LADOWSKY

Ellen Ladowsky is a Washington writer.

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Noah Webster Academy

A key idea behind charter schools, the latest movement in education reform, is that many terrific opportunities to improve public education are lost because they are squelched by school bureaucracies. Charter school laws, which have been passed in 12 states and are pending in 9 or 10 more, are supposed to allow teachers and others the chance to establish public schools that are largely independent of state and local control. Supporters say that throwing away the rule book will unleash creativity and that the fresh, new ideas developed in these charter schools will revitalize all public schools. But it's not so easy to draw the line between encouraging schools that have the freedom to experiment and ones where doing your own thing has nothing to do with improving public education.

This problem is already obvious in Michigan. Charter school legislation goes into effect this fall, and the first "school" out of the gate will be the Noah Webster Academy, which is nothing but a clever scheme to get public money for children who are already being educated by their parents—at home.

According to reporter Steve Stecklow's story in the *Wall Street Journal* (June 14, 1994), Noah Webster's founder, a lawyer specializing in home schooling cases, has signed up 700 students—mostly Christian home schoolers—for a school that is actually a computer network. The students will continue to study at home the way they do now, but every family will get a taxpayer-paid computer, printer and modem, and there will be an optional curriculum that teaches creationism alongside biology.

$4 million—for starters—will be going to a group of people who are eager for public funds but could care less about public education.

Does this actually fall within the Michigan charter school law? Barely. Stecklow quotes a Michigan state administrator who says it is "push[ing] the envelope...just about as far as you probably can." Critics had predicted that something like this would happen, and the response was that charters would be issued by school boards or colleges and they could be trusted to be responsible.

But Noah Webster's founder discovered a tiny, impoverished school district—it has 23 students, one teacher and a teacher's aide, and it nearly went broke a few years ago. It agreed to sponsor his school, and give it a 99-year charter, in return for a kickback of about $40,000. Based on current applications, Noah Webster, which is eligible for state funds to the tune of $5,500 per pupil, will get something in the neighborhood of $4 million of public money in the coming academic year.

Last year, Michigan suffered a big educational and financial crisis when the state decided to stop using property taxes to pay for education and had to scramble for other ways of financing its schools. The previous system gave a big advantage to wealthy districts, and the new one has provided some measure of equalization between wealthy districts and poor ones. Nevertheless, kids in wealthy districts are still getting more public money spent on them than kids in cities like Detroit. And now, the charter school law, which is supposed to be about using public money to test ideas that could improve education in troubled school districts like Detroit, is giving $4 million—for starters—to a group of people who are eager for public funds but could care less about public education.

Most charter school supporters genuinely believe that by trying out ideas that have been ignored in conventional schools, charter schools will improve public education. But this strategy won't work if the legislation permits these schools to be totally unconnected to the school district that sponsors them. Charter schools must have autonomy to get where they want to go, but they must also be part of a system that has a central purpose—and that means a system that has decided what kids need to know and be able to do. Otherwise, they will end up like all those alternative schools of the 1960s—relevant only to themselves and useless to the system as a whole.

But there are other supporters of charter schools whose real aim is to smash the public schools. Unless charter school legislation is carefully crafted and controlled, charter schools will not lead to improved public education. Instead, we will see the money used to pay for educating kids whose parents are already looking after their education at home or to finance what are really private schools. And all of this will take place without any public debate and totally out of the public eye—while other youngsters still struggle in school districts that need the kind of help charter schools are supposed to provide. The public is very unlikely to have supported the notion that $4 million should go to a "school" like Noah Webster Academy when these glaring needs exist.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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ney's plans for an "American heritage" park—sumptuous story-telling in the vein of Zorro bringing justice to colonial California, young Natty Gann riding the rails during the Depression and Virginia's own Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, fighting for American independence. Instead came a double message: humdrum splashed with historicizing hype.

A full-color prospectus prepared last fall for Virginia legislators describes a tricked-up used-ride lot. At Freedomland, visitors rode with trappers in bullboats, playacting the opening of the Northwest. Disney slaps the names Lewis and Clark across the donut-shaped whitewater rafts you ride at Six Flags. At Freedomland, you dodged Blue and Gray crossfire in a Civil War "correspondent's wagon." Disney offers a 360-degree movie—stunning technology for 1955. The prospectus also includes the obligatory steam train, like Disneyland's and Freedomland's; a Hall of Presidents duped from Disney World; and a baseball stadium borrowed, perhaps, from the Kansas City Royals theme park that struck out near Orlando. Its "Industrial Revolution" is a roller coaster. Even its geography is generic: a mill town called Enterprise, a Victory Field honoring weapons (but no reason to fight) and a State Fair with a Ferris Wheel and another coaster—the kind of place Walt Disney reportedly despised, the kind to which Disneyland was legendarily a response.

Recently, however, Disney has disavowed its own plans. The "imagineers" are back at the drawing board, Disney spokesman John Dreyer told me in early July; the ultimate Disney's America will be different. "Some of the criticism we've heard and read has gotten into our subconscious," Dreyer said, before he faxed me a pile of op-ed pieces under Michael Eisner's name. The op-eds parry objections to the scale and environmental impact of the development. Aligning Disney with the better angels of our time, Eisner's ghostwriters name-drop Native-, African- and Hispanic-American issues, women's issues, diversity. But they don't even hint at the experience customers will be buying. There are no specifics about rides, no sense of place in broad strokes. There are only themes—not Adventureland and Tomorrowland, but "resistance to injustice," "tolerance and inclusion," "rising to challenges," "promises of the future" and "our belief that ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things." Oh, my. Is this a theme park or a bad night on PBS?

High ideals are nice, but they mask the essential question—whether Disney has a vision of America. Freedomland did. Its mythic perspective wasn't the modish nostalgia of Ken Burns and Shelby Foote, all reverent image, sonorous quote and pseudo-documentary rue. It may have been quaint, a boisterous, Whitmanesque republic, but at least its developers showed imagination. Disney, to date, has not. Pragmatism drives today's Disney corporation: recycling stories, cross-marketing, juggling debt, implicating local politicians in the success of its deals. That pragmatism glows at the heart of the new development, with its off-the-shelf design and its hustle to placate critics. That pragmatism—not some Mickey Mouse version of history—is Disney's America's fundamental flaw.

Ironically, pragmatism proved a flaw of Freedomland, too. The first American history theme park was unlucky from the start. Plans for a T.V. show, like those that flacked for Disneyland, fell through. The summer the park opened, armed robbers stole $28,836 from a business office and then escaped, like pirates of the Caribbean, by boat. Press coverage of the spine-snapping stagecoach ride didn't help, either. By its second season, Freedomland was attracting as much repeat business as, say, the Manassas National Battlefield—which is why its pragmatic owners decided to dilute the theme story with Arthurian jousts and big-band oldies nights. By 1963 there were bumper cars, a roller coaster, a Last Supper made of wax. There was refinancing, new management and, finally, in 1964, Chapter 11. Spokespersons blamed the New York World's Fair, the first East Coast showcase for authentic Disney attractions (including the debut of the wired Mr. Lincoln).

Governor Nelson Rockefeller had puffed Freedomland when it opened. Not five years later, he was announcing new plans for the tract. Co-op City, the world's largest apartment complex, would rise upon that hallowed ground.

RUSSELL MILLER is a New York writer.

Welfare reform and human experimentation.

RATS

By Dante Ramos

Does New Jersey treat welfare recipients like lab rats? The state's ACLU and Legal Services chapters and the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund (NOW LDEF) think so. These groups, on behalf of eight welfare recipients, are suing New Jersey and the federal government over the state's "child exclusion" rule (also known as a family cap). The two-year-old rule denies additional cash aid to parents who conceive children while on the dole. New Jersey officials say the rule reduces the birth rate among welfare recipients. The plaintiffs counter that by withholding aid, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and New Jersey's Department of Human Services (DHS) are conducting human experiments—harmful research on human subjects without their consent.

If HHS loses the case, *C. K.* v. *Shalala*, shock waves will spread far beyond the Garden State. Georgia and Arkansas have similar laws on the books; these will be

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IT'S TIME WE TOOK RUSH LIMBAUGH SERIOUSLY.

Rush Limbaugh, whose political spiels are broadcast on over 625 radio and 220 TV stations nationwide, is often called "provocative." It would be more accurate to call him "wrong." And that's not just a matter of opinion. It's a matter of fact. Rush Limbaugh's groundless assertions on issues of public importance include:

- "most Canadian physicians" come to the U.S. when in need of surgery;
- nicotine's addictiveness "has not been proven";
- volcanoes do more harm to the ozone layer than man-made chemicals;
- condom users have a one-in-five AIDS risk;
- "the poorest people in America are better off than the mainstream of families in Europe";
- "we have more acreage of forestland in the United States today than we did at the time the Constitution was written";
- Nixon would have defeated Kennedy in 1960 if "only 4,000 votes" had "gone another way in Chicago";
- "not one indictment" resulted from Lawrence Walsh's Iran-Contra investigation.

All of these assertions, and many more, are plain wrong. It's all documented in a new report, "Limbaugh's Reign of Error," in FAIR's magazine *EXTRA!*

Yet Rush Limbaugh seldom, if ever, corrects his factual errors on the air — errors that mislead public opinion, pollute public policy debate, jeopardize public health and, in the case of one rumor, reportedly caused a drop in the stock market. After the release of FAIR's compilation of Limbaugh's fallacies, he repeatedly concocted new canards in attempts to defend his original errors.

Given the millions of people who believe Limbaugh, it's no laughing matter that his unchallenged political sermons are packed with falsehoods.

But to rebut Limbaugh seems beneath the dignity of some journalists. ABC's Ted Koppel has presented Limbaugh as an "expert" on the environment and, recently, on Whitewater. As Limbaugh's audience increases and his errors grow more grim, doesn't the need for accountability become more urgent?

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challenged on similar grounds, says Mary Wyckoff of the ACLU's Atlanta office, if the New Jersey law is overturned. What are the chances that the plaintiffs will win? While this looks like yet another case of do-gooders trying to resolve a political fight with a nettlesome lawsuit, because of a recent ruling by a federal appeals court, the New Jersey challenge could actually succeed.

Some background: a 1962 amendment to the Social Security Act, Section 1115, says that HHS can waive federal welfare requirements temporarily so states can tinker with the system. Typically, a state must pay all families of a given size the same benefits, but HHS has allowed New Jersey to suspend that rule until October 1997. The plaintiffs consider the Section 1115 waiver invalid because of a provision written into every human services appropriations bill since 1974—no risky research can receive federal funds unless its subjects give informed consent.

Opponents of the child exclusion rule don't have precedent on their side. Before this year, only two challenges to state welfare innovations made it beyond the district court level, and neither objected to human subject "research" per se. The plaintiff in *Aguayo* v. *Richardson*, decided by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in 1973, complained about a New York workfare program's statewide scope. The plaintiff in the 1970 Supreme Court case *Dandridge* v. *Williams* argued merely that Maryland's family cap wouldn't further the goals of AFDC.

What about whether cutting someone's benefits amounts to a risky procedure? Historically, courts have maintained that it doesn't—that the size of a welfare check reflects taxpayers' ability and willingness to pay. In *Dandridge*, the Supreme Court ruled that states can seek "an equitable balance between families on welfare and those supported by an employed breadwinner." In *Aguayo*, the appeals court recognized taxpayers' "growing antagonism to the welfare system" as a factor that government can weigh. Public aid is a favor, the argument goes, and a smaller favor is never dangerous.

Yet thanks to the California case *Beno* v. *Shalala*, the prevailing judicial attitude may be changing. In July 1993, despite an overheated brief by Yale law and medicine professor Jay Katz, the district court for Eastern California refused to throw out the state's experimental 1.3 percent AFDC cut. ("Maybe comparing [the cut] to Auschwitz was too much," Katz now says.) The court ruled that the cut was not "so significant as to remove the [project] from the general exemption of benefits projects from the informed consent requirement." This July, however, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court reversed the district court and invalidated California's waiver. HHS, the panel said, didn't sufficiently consider the harm a benefit cut might produce. The reversal represents the New Jersey plantiffs' single shaft of light. If the New Jersey court follows the California courts' logic, the plaintiffs would have to prove either that freezing benefits caused severe hardship or that HHS didn't deliberate enough—two fuzzy standards that they might be able to meet.

The New Jersey plaintiffs also charge—less convincingly—that DHS and HHS have violated the Constitution's equal protection clause. The child exclusion discriminates against children, the plaintiffs say, (*a*) since they were born after the law took effect, and (*b*) because of their parents' actions. Yet in *Dandridge*, the Court ruled that in setting benefits states can make discriminatory classifications that even thin evidence—"any state of facts"—justifies. Adele Blong, a plaintiffs' attorney for *Aguayo* and now the associate director of the Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law in Washington, D.C., says she doubts that equal protection challenges will succeed. Even NOW LDEF plays down this approach. In the group's spring 1994 newsletter, a blurb on *C.K.* mentions equal protection only briefly. It focuses on experimentation.

The truth is that welfare advocates dislike the child exclusion not because it might be an experiment; they dislike it for political reasons. "It's not the imposition of certain regulations that bothers us," says Marsha Wenk, legal director of the ACLU's New Jersey chapter. "It's withholding benefits to see if you can alter human behavior." Would Wenk then oppose other government-imposed disincentives, such as a tax on cigarettes? "I won't say that," Wenk says. Aren't both policies that simply make some choices more costly than others? "It's just different," she insists.

Rather than suing, Wenk and others might do better to attack the child exclusion rule in state legislatures with two political arguments. First, mothers who have been raped or can't afford contraceptives haven't made a rational choice to conceive. States could easily carve out exceptions for rape and link family caps with birth control programs. Also, the child exclusion may not work. Although DHS says the birthrate of New Jersey's welfare mothers has dropped 8 or 9 percent since the rule took effect, Center for Law and Social Policy analyst Michael Laracy claims that some mothers haven't reported new births. "Why rush to inform the [county] that you just had a baby if your family's AFDC grant is not going to increase?" he writes. (Maybe, but he fails to mention that Medicaid and Food Stamp benefits still rise.)

As it stands, this kludge of a lawsuit will likely go to trial this fall. Ironically, even if the plaintiffs somehow win, they could harm their own cause. After all, a victory would gum up the waiver process, by which HHS ensures that states don't institute overly harsh welfare rules. If they don't mind losing federal poverty-relief funds, states can drop out of AFDC; Governor William Weld, for example, has proposed this option for Massachusetts. Other states might sidestep the experimentation issue by following his example. And Congress might just allow states to impose family caps without HHS supervision; in fact, the Clinton welfare plan recommends this route. "That's the risk," Blong admits. Still, she supports the human experimentation tack as an untried way to cut down some welfare laws. "It's got a ways to go," she says, "and it's an evolving area." Let's hope it evolves no further. •

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The right way, and wrong way, to fight fires.

FLAME AND FORTUNE

By Stephen J. Pyne

The firefight as battlefield, the fire crew as warriors—these are the prisms through which the country has always viewed its confrontation with wildfire. Revealingly, the archived records for Forest Service fire control begin with the deaths of seventy-nine firefighters in the Rocky Mountain conflagration of 1910. The recent tragedy in Colorado that killed fourteen firefighters reminds us why the imagery persists. The problem is, all-out warfare is not a useful way to think about our relationship with fire.

The analogy has a long pedigree. Fire control by the federal government began when the U.S. cavalry rode into Yellowstone National Park in 1886 and began fighting fires. The cavalry's example inspired eager successors: in 1897 the National Academy of Science recommended that the Army take over the nation's public forests and that West Point teach forestry, since fire and trespass were the main problems afflicting America's wildlands.

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM HOLLOWAY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Fire and war were truly united in 1910. The same month that flames devastated the northern Rockies—the August that Forest Ranger Edward Pulaski, a descendant of Count Pulaski of Revolutionary War fame, held his panicky crew at gunpoint in an abandoned mineshaft while a firestorm raged around them—William James published "On the Moral Equivalent of War," an essay in which he urged a national conscription of youths to sublimate the martial spirit into a war against the forces of nature. If war, as the pacifist James argued, was "the romance of history," then firefighting would be the romance of forestry. Ranger Elers Koch, who wrote a history of the 1910 fires, explained that a firefighter remembers fires "as the soldier remembers the separate engagements of the war." After World War I *American Forestry* campaigned for "suitable headstones with bronze tablets" for dead firefighters as "heroes of peace," who "died as truly in the service of their country as did those of Flander's poppy-covered fields."

During the 1920s chief foresters routinely petitioned for the seasonal cantonment of Army units in the national forests to battle fires. Their needs were met in 1933 with the creation of Franklin Roosevelt's "Tree Army," the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC camps promised better results than the pick-up crews of the unemployed: the ill-disciplined mob that fought the 1933 Griffith Park fire in Los Angeles, for example, wound up with twenty-eight of its members dead and 125 in the hospital. Even with training, the CCC lost twenty-nine firefighters in its nine-year history. After the 1937 Blackwater fire in Wyoming killed fifteen, the American Forestry Association helped create a forest fire medal for heroism; the first awards were posthumous. The need for better-trained elites led in 1939 to the creation of parachute smokechasers and forty-man "shock troop" crews to staff large fires. By then, forest defense, as the patriotic posters announced, was national defense. When the Army wanted to establish a paratrooper base, it studied Forest Service smokejumper operations; when fire broke out in 1943 at Hauser Creek in the Cleveland National Forest, the Marines who fought it left behind eleven dead and seventy-two injured; amid fears over incendiary attacks, the Wartime Advertising Council created Smokey the Bear to promote fire prevention.

The Mann Gulch fire of August 1949 that killed thirteen firefighters burned the same month that the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb, effectively announcing a cold war on fire. The movie it inspired, the 1952 "Red Skies of Montana," ended with smokejumpers improbably digging foxholes during their firefight—a clear parable of the Korean War then raging. The next summer, the Rattlesnake fire killed a crew of fifteen in California. The wholesale conversion of surplus military hardware to fire control reinforced the sense that firefighting was the moral equivalent of war. From the 1950s on, B-17s and PB4Y2s filled the skies above blazes; retrofitted Jeeps and halftracks prowled firelines. Chief Forester Richard McArdle eulogized the eleven firefighters who died in Southern California's 1956 Inaja fire as heroes "in the defense of the free world." During the late 1950s, when the United States improved aerial fire control in Alaska, a crucial cold war frontier, the Soviets responded by upgrading their fire controls in Siberia. In 1961 the Forest Service organized its best crews in a rapid deployment force, the celebrated "hot shots." Before the 1966 Loop fire took twelve of its members the El Carriso Hotshots wore berets in imitation of the Special Forces in Vietnam. The firefight-as-battlefield motif was dramatically present during the big Western fires of 1987 and 1988, when the military was again deployed for fire duty.

Now the fourteen deaths in Colorado are stirring the ashes of analogy once again—though this time they're being stirred warily, for the necessities of fire protection, like the necessities of our post-cold war military, have changed. To pursue the old analogy would place the firefighters who died on Storm King Mountain in the

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position of the Army Rangers killed chasing General Aideed in Mogadishu—brave warriors fighting for a compromised cause. There are better alternatives.

Our relationship to fire is symbiotic. We are the one species that can start and, within limits, stop fires. Historically, the ability to do the former has made the latter possible: the best way to control fire is with controlled fire. Humans prevented wildfires by igniting their own. Not until the industrial revolution, when science and technology harnessed fire for mechanization, did people assume fire could be tamed and, if necessary, eradicated.

Not surprisingly, it was the great 1910 fires that prompted a national debate on fire policy. The discussion turned out to be about much more than how to handle conflagrations. Aggressive fire suppression was European; controlled light burning was, as the poet Joaquin Miller put it, "the Indian way." Folk philosophers could not win against academic science. As the body count mounted and federal troops poured into the area to restore order, the suggestion that fire should be countenanced, that the enemy should be given any room to maneuver, was deemed not only wrong but traitorous. Fatalities hardened ideology; to question public policy was to question the private sacrifices of the dead. The problem was fire, and the solution was less of it, not more.

Like the twentieth-century American military, the fire establishment was given ample financing to carry out its ambitious strategy. The Forest Fires Emergency Act of 1908 authorized the Forest Service to spend whatever was necessary, subject to supplemental appropriations, to combat the emergency. The prospect of a blank check frightened many fire officers at the time. But the money was irresistible, and the American wildfire establishment grew around it like crystals on a string.

Fire protection thus became an institution of American affluence. But there are some things money can't buy. It can't keep fires from starting or big fires from breaking loose. Since the 1960s, approximately 2 to 3 percent of fires have accounted for more than 95 percent of the total burned area, an irreducible quantum grounded in environmental conditions. The Yellowstone firestorm of 1988 sucked in $130 million with no appreciable effect on fire size or behavior. Meanwhile, the cost of suppressing fires has risen, with supplemental appropriations absorbing more and more of that expense. A large fire can easily burn up $1 million a day. Even as the fire community recognized that fire suppression alone was inadequate, even as the agencies reformed their policies in the 1970s to accommodate controlled burning, even as ecological analysis demonstrated the need for more fires to revive depleted ecosystems, federal and state land agencies have continued to send crews to the front lines.

The environmental tragedy was not simply that wildfires were suppressed but that controlled ones were no longer kindled. Withholding fire has, in many landscapes, created a crisis in biotic health. It's the environmental equivalent of the S&L scandal. One manifestation has been a catastrophic buildup of combustible biomass, stockpiles of wildland fuels unmatched in history. Accordingly, more fires burn more intensely than in the past, and any attempt to restore a different regimen of fire must operate within ever-shrinking margins. The costs to reintroduce fire to millions of acres of wildland annually would require constant supervision and a combustion Superfund. It's hard to imagine that there's a big constituency waiting to embrace this policy. The fire rehabilitation of Oregon's Blue Mountains calls for a down payment of 100,000 acres burned per year.

Social circumstances are also worsening. Pressures on the public lands have intensified. The vanishing rural landscape has removed a once-useful buffer and stuffed it with houses—still more fuel, and more critics of any policy other than all-out firefighting. Legal issues, air quality standards, endangered species considerations and interest groups have extended the gridlock.

Wildfires will continue as long as there are wildlands: the issue is not whether fires burn, but how. In the past few years fire officers have struggled to kindle a thousand points of light with fusees and helitorches, but the amount control-burned is minuscule; the ecological darkness grows. That leaves the burden on firefighting, now ever more essential, isolated and desperate. But by itself it can only temporize. Firefighting cannot eradicate the volatile legacy of the past or dissolve the confusion of the present. Increasingly, it must struggle to justify its obsessions, even if they're fatal.

STEPHEN J. PYNE is author of *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland & Rural Fire* (Princeton).

Are U.S. ambassadorships for sale?

GREEN WITH ENVOY

By Thomas Omestad

In 1989 Senator Al Gore decried George Bush's nomination of six $100,000-plus Republican donors to be U.S. ambassadors, calling it "an abuse for which there is no justification." Last year Secretary of State Warren Christopher pledged that President Clinton's recommendations for envoys will be "based upon qualifications that extend beyond campaign participation and will require some real expertise." You'd think, then, that in the Clinton-Gore era, ambassadorships would no longer be used as political spoils.

Think again. By the end of his first year in office, according to an Associated Press review, Clinton had nominated five $100,000-plus Democratic donors as ambassadors—only one less than Bush's six. There's Larry Lawrence, a San Diego hotelier whose family and businesses have given more than $400,000 to Democratic candidates since 1987. He now represents the

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United States in Switzerland. There's Swanee Hunt, the philanthropist daughter of the late Texas oil billionaire H. L. Hunt. She and her family have given the Democrats nearly $329,000 since 1987; she now heads the U.S. embassy in Austria. There's Pamela Harriman, Washington's grande dame of fund-raising, who has given nearly $131,000 since 1987 and is Clinton's ambassador to France; and Atlanta businessmen Terry Dornbush and Edward Elson, whose families gave nearly $254,000 and nearly $183,000 and who ended up with Holland and Denmark, respectively. Ten other Clinton appointees had chipped in more than $10,000 each.

As of July 1994—after eighteen months in office—42 percent of Clinton's ambassadorial nominees and 29 percent of his sitting envoys were political, according to the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). (The latter figure reflects a large number of Foreign Service holdovers from the Bush years.) Since the days of JFK, around 30 percent has been the norm. At the end of Bush's term, by which time he had installed his own people everywhere, 23 percent were political.

There's nothing new about this, of course. Ambassadorial spoils are a time-honored American tradition dating back to Andrew Jackson. The Founding Fathers hoped that Senate confirmation would block the practice, but rewarding cronies has always proved irresistible. In 1980 Congress passed a law solemnly declaring that "contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor in the appointment" of an ambassador, yet the restriction is a joke. Administration after administration stamps out "certificates of demonstrated competence" for its nominees; only rarely is a candidate really challenged. Both parties want to bestow the vaunted title of "ambassador" on their friends and benefactors.

And they do. Veteran Foreign Service officers still laugh at the mere mention of Dwight Eisenhower's pick for ambassador to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Louisville apparel merchant Maxwell Gluck. Gluck could not recall the name of Ceylon's prime minister, and once characterized Ceylon's relationship with the United States with this Quaylean gem: "I think they are a people who are friendly and unfriendly."

During the Nixon administration the president's lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, came to be known in American embassies as a "bag man" for his reported solicitations of campaign contributions from sitting ambassadors, linking the process to lucre as never before. Kalmbach pleaded guilty to promising one U.S. ambassador in the Caribbean a European assignment in exchange for a $100,000 contribution. In all, the Nixon campaigns in 1968 and 1972 collected $2 million from future ambassadors.

The Bush administration was not quite as bad. Bush named Michigan lumber baron Peter Secchia, a $10,000-plus donor in 1987-88, as U.S. envoy to Rome; the Italian newspapers dubbed him "the ambassador of dirty words," alluding to his alleged penchant for making crude remarks. For Australia and Spain, Bush picked

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Florida developers Melvin Sembler and Joseph Zappala; they were members of Bush's "Team 100," GOP contributors of more than $100,000. For the Bahamas, Bush tapped former Senator Chic Hecht of Nevada. Describing his qualifications, Hecht cited his love for golf and experience with gambling.

State Department and White House officials insist that Clinton's share of political nominees will decline with time. According to Richard Moose, undersecretary of state for management, the president recently reaffirmed a commitment to Christopher to uphold the traditional 70-30 split between career and noncareer appointments.

Even so, in an administration that professes disdain for the politicizing of ambassadorships, Larry Lawrence's nomination should have been embarrassing. With him and his wife, Shelia, the White House got a Swiss twofer: Larry, a key fund-raiser for Clinton and congressional Democrats, was slated for the U.S. embassy in Bern, while Shelia, who headed the Clinton-Gore campaign in Southern California, was named special U.S. representative to the World Conservation Union in Geneva. AFSA strongly opposed Lawrence, declaring him unfit to serve because of his slight international experience. Although Lawrence said he had conducted numerous negotiations with Swiss business figures, he seemed confused about his destination. He described Switzerland, fiercely neutral for centuries, as an important U.S. ally in Central Europe, and flubbed a question on export controls—a major issue with the Swiss. He was unable to win even the typical rubber-stamp endorsement of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Before the full Senate voted on his nomination, Lawrence paid a $7,179 fine to the Federal Election Commission for exceeding the $25,000 individual limit on contributions to candidates in 1988. Nonetheless, he was confirmed on February 8 by a vote of 79-16. The scrap did not seem to trouble the president, who spent his Easter vacation at the Lawrences' beachside mansion with Hillary and Chelsea.

Swanee Hunt enjoyed smoother sailing in her journey to the Danube. She broke politically from her right-wing father and in 1977 hit the road for Denver. There she channeled some of her personal fortune—reportedly more than $300 million—toward good causes, from helping the homeless to nurturing community groups. During the 1992 campaign she gave more than $262,000 in "soft money" to the Democrats. At her nomination hearing, Hunt touted the Austrian connections of her husband, Charles Ansbacher, who studied conducting at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. One unimpressed Senate Democratic source calls Hunt's appointment "a classic buying of an ambassadorship."

Money, however, isn't the only currency at work here. Sending Sidney Williams to the Bahamas was a different sort of payback for political debts accrued. Williams, a onetime linebacker for the Cleveland Browns, is married to Representative Maxine Waters of California, an African American who lent Clinton key early support during the campaign. After the election Waters lobbied to get an ambassadorship for her husband, who in the mid-1970s worked as an aide to a Los Angeles city councilman and as an urban redevelopment manager, and for the last fifteen years has sold Mercedes-Benzes in Hollywood. Williams's competence certificate singles out his years on the gridiron as teaching "strong discipline, strategic thinking and negotiating skills." By that reasoning, Joe Montana should be president.

Several years ago Bush Personnel Director Chase Untermeyer offered a reasonably forthright public defense of selling embassies: ambassadors were selected for their loyalty to the president, and for some "the degree of support was financial." The Clinton administration seems to take a similar attitude. Ambassadorial picks, Moose says, reflect "some measure of reward for people who share the president's values and support his program.... The very fact that someone has contributed generously should not disqualify him from a post."

In fact, most observers rate Clinton's political picks on the whole as more qualified than those of Bush and Ronald Reagan. "They have not had as many clunkers as the Republicans," says AFSA president F. A. Harris. The Japanese, for instance, correctly see Walter Mondale as a heavyweight diplomat, someone with the stature to help steady a shaky U.S.-Japan partnership. Admiral William Crowe, Reagan's chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave the Clinton campaign cover on defense issues; he is a clever choice for the U.K., which wants reassurance that the president values the "special" relationship of the countries and doesn't hold a grudge against Prime Minister John Major for his close ties to Bush. Another apt political envoy is investment banker Nicholas Rey, who worked on the Clinton transition team at the Treasury Department. Rey was assigned to Warsaw; he speaks fluent Polish and had led efforts to stimulate private investment there. And Harriman, despite her money role, has used her fluency in French and her familiarity with the French leadership to America's advantage.

Those picks show that political considerations don't need to be ignored, just tempered by good judgment. Many political envoys have outperformed Foreign Service veterans, who at times suffer from excessive elitism and clientitis. Some of the best ambassadors have been political, such as Mike Mansfield to Japan (under Carter and Reagan), W. Averell Harriman to the Soviet Union (FDR and Truman) and David Bruce to the U.K. (Kennedy and Johnson). Ambassadors are the president's men and women, not the State Department's, and they should enjoy his confidence. But they should also bring real qualifications to the job—and some *gravitas*.

The United States is the only major country that treats ambassadorships as political rewards, and both Democrats and Republicans seem content with keeping it that way. In a cynical age, it may be too much to ask the parties to abandon the spoils. But at least they could be choosier in handing out their prizes.

THOMAS OMESTAD is associate editor of *Foreign Policy*.

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NEXT OF KIM

By Stephen J. Solarz

When Jimmy Carter, after concluding several hours of discussions in Pyongyang with North Korea's Great Leader, Kim Il Sung, declared that "the crisis is over" on the Korean peninsula, a sigh of relief could be heard around the world. It appeared as if the drift toward a diplomatic and economic confrontation, and possibly even a military conflict, had been averted. If Carter was right, and no one could say with certainty that he was wrong, the stage had been set for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear challenge.

Pyongyang subsequently agreed to permit inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to remain in North Korea to verify its commitment not to reprocess the fuel rods that it had recently extracted from its reactor (which would have given it the capacity to make five or six nuclear weapons by the end of the year), and to refrain from reloading its only operational reactor while negotiations were underway with the United States; and this, too, put wind in the sails of the optimists. So did the setting of dates for a third round of negotiations with Washington in July and the first summit ever between the leaders of the two Koreas in August.

Then Kim Il Sung died. (The Great Leader's fuel rods were finally spent.) In Pyongyang, nothing was clear. The struggle for succession, if such a struggle is taking place, is obscure; and the likely successor, the Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il, the son of the Great Leader, is even more obscure. It is hard, of course, to make foreign policy in circumstances so uncertain; but it would be a great blunder for American policymakers to allow gossip from Pyong-yang and diplomatic politesse to interfere with the historical and strategic understanding of the North Korean problem. Idle speculation about the succession, or even informed speculation, matters less than the words and the actions of North Korea at the negotiating table in Geneva and at the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon.

This problem has a past and a logic. Pyongyang has persistently prevaricated on the nuclear issue. Over the years it has consistently said one thing and done another. It signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) but refused to carry it out. It agreed to let the IAEA inspect its nuclear facilities but interfered with the IAEA's efforts to do so. It entered into an agreement with South Korea obligating it to dismantle its reprocessing plant but blithely ignored the pact.

My own experience in North Korea suggests that its commitments have about the same value as Tsarist war bonds. In 1980, when I met Kim Il Sung for the first time, he told me that he favored ameliorating the human consequences of the division of Korea by permitting family visitations, the exchange of correspondence and trade between the peoples on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel. More than a decade later virtually none of these reforms has taken place. In 1991, when I met him for the second time, the Great Leader assured me that he had no interest in obtaining nuclear weapons, and that North Korea was not attempting to construct a reprocessing facility, in spite of the fact that there was incontrovertible evidence the country was doing both.

Now, despite its promise to "freeze" its nuclear program while talks are underway with the United States, North Korea continues work on a 200 megawatt reactor, which will give it the capacity to produce enough fissile material for ten or more atom bombs per year when it is completed in 1996. It is also still constructing a "second line" in its reprocessing plant, which will enable it to produce additional nuclear weapons more rapidly should it decide to resume reprocessing in the future. What is needed now, in short, is not wishful thinking but hardheaded analysis.

Such an analysis must begin with a recognition of the fact that the North Korean nuclear project constitutes the most serious threat to the preservation of regional peace and global nonproliferation in the world today. An unconstrained North Korean nuclear program would give Pyongyang the ability to produce and to stockpile dozens, and eventually hundreds, of nuclear weapons. Far from being over, the crisis may soon be upon us. In the absence of a verifiable agreement bringing its nuclear weapons project to an end, the North Koreans will be in a position to make up to fifteen atom bombs per year by 1996, and could easily have more than fifty by the end of the century.

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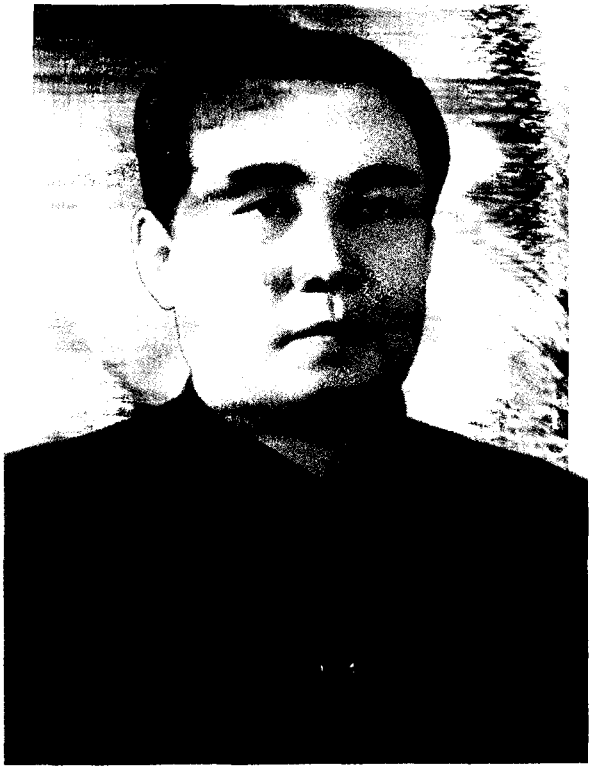
An atomic arsenal of this magnitude would have a number of dangerous and destabilizing consequences.

• It would increase the risks of another conventional war on the Korean peninsula. Should it decide once again to attempt to reunify Korea under Communist control, or should it decide to break, by military means, the international community's efforts to thwart its nuclear program, Pyongyang would have enormous leverage to end the fighting on its terms, which might encourage it to begin the fighting in the first place.

• It would increase the prospects for a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia by putting pressure on Japan and South Korea, the countries most immediately threatened by North Korea's nuclear potential, to join the nuclear club themselves.

• It would increase the chances that Japan, for the third time, and South Korea, for the first time, will become victims of a nuclear attack.

• It would increase the possibilities of nuclear proliferation by giving North Korea the capacity to earn desperately needed foreign exchange by selling its fissile material, and even off-the-rack nuclear weapons, to whoever is able to buy them.



KIM IL SUNG BY JIM HOLLOWAY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is likely that the first three of these potential consequences could be averted by the realities of America's conventional military power and nuclear deterrent. North Korea has no interest, after all, in inviting its own destruction by launching another conventional war against South Korea or a nuclear attack against Japan; and so long as the United States credibly reaffirms its determination to consider a nuclear strike against South Korea or Japan the equivalent of a nuclear attack against itself, our allies would most probably continue to refrain from joining the nuclear club. For this reason, some have dismissed concerns about North Korea's nuclear program on the grounds that, just as we prevented the Soviet Union and China from using their nuclear weapons through a policy of containment and deterrence, we can prevent Pyongyang from launching its nuclear weapons as well.

But this rather sanguine assessment overlooks the real problem, which is that Pyongyang is more likely to sell its nuclear weapons than use them. If this were to happen, and with an unconstrained North Korean nuclear program it surely will, it would dash whatever hopes still exist for a truly effective and global nonproliferation regime. The Hermit Kingdom, remember, has consistently demonstrated its indifference to established norms of national behavior. Among its more notable exercises in international terrorism were its efforts in the 1980s to assassinate the entire South Korean Cabinet during the course of an official visit to Rangoon, the blowing up of a South Korean civilian airliner over the Andaman Sea and the abduction of a leading South Korean actress to satisfy the cinematic appetites of Kim Jong Il. Its record of selling intermediate-range missiles to Iraq, Syria, Libya and Iran leaves little doubt that it will provide fissile material and nuclear weapons to whatever rogue regimes and terrorist groups are prepared to pay the market price.

It is one thing to describe the threat. It is quite another to figure out how to deal with it. The Clinton administration has three options: diplomacy, sanctions and force. With the moment of truth fast approaching, it is important to consider each of these options, and for the United States and its Asian allies to determine not only what they want from North Korea, but what they are prepared to do in order to get it.

Obviously, the best way to resolve the problem would be through a negotiated agreement in which Pyongyang undertook to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Such a settlement would entail North Korea dismantling its reprocessing facility, stopping any further work on its 200 megawatt reactor, relinquishing all the fissile material it has already produced, including its recently discharged spent fuel, and accepting "special inspections" by the IAEA. Without the latter, which would entitle the IAEA to inspect not just Pyongyang's declared facilities but also any location where it has reason to suspect that prohibited activities may be taking place, it would be impossible to preclude the possibility that, like Iraq before the Gulf war, North Korea had a clandestine program or arsenal. North Korea, after all, has a long history of building large-scale munitions factories underground, as it did during the Korean War, and tunnels under the demilitarized zone, as it did in the years after.

Such a settlement will require the United States and its Asian allies to be clear about what they would be willing to give North Korea in exchange for such commitments. In the discussions that preceded the recent meeting in Geneva, we said only that we would talk about the normalization of our relationship with Pyongyang if it agreed to our demands, and refrained from spelling out what we would be willing to do for North Korea if it abandons its nuclear project. A purely

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Why America Needs an Immigration Moratorium

From amidst the cacophony of discordant immigration proposals, one hears the emergence of some simple truths. First we now know that immigration is costing somebody, or some people, a lot of money. Whether it's hundreds of millions or billions (the studies never seem to agree), it's clear that immigration is not a self-financing proposition. State taxpayers in California, Florida, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and Texas are demanding action.

Second, it's clear that immigration is now a political issue of some potency. Polls indicated that most Americans generally oppose immigration, if for no other reason than they think immigration is needless. Some is OK, they say, but only as long as there are no noticeable ill effects.

But all that changed in the face of Haitian boats, the World Trade Center bombing, Chinese boats, international immigrant-smuggling and crime syndicates, persistent illegal immigration from Mexico, and high profile tales of immigrant-related welfare rip-offs.

Now a public consensus has emerged: Let's hold off on more immigration. If immigration is costing money and creating other problems, why not just give the country a break from immigration for a while?

So far, the political leadership in this country has failed to grasp this whole analysis. Most Democrats and Republicans have suggested either beefing up the Border Patrol or cutting benefits for illegal immigrants. Within these two broad strategies is an array of often inconsistent ideas to "defuse immigrant bashing," as it's often called.

The administration's "border enhancement plan," for example, includes measures to accelerate naturalization ceremonies. This noble- sounding initiative to create more citizens will actually produce longer backlogs for waiting relatives (now at 4 million) and only increase future pressures for illegal immigration.

Eventually political leaders will have to face facts: Immigration is costing money. Rather than cut off welfare to immigrants, or rubber-stamp more applications, Congress and the president need to think about cutting the number of immigrants. That's really what the public wants. And it is probably only a matter of time before most politicians figure this out.

Unfortunately, the current laws take us in exactly the wrong direction, actually causing immigration levels to increase.

Based on current projections of temporary and permanent immigration, new labor market entrants are likely to exceed available jobs by more than 8 million in the next 10 years. This cannot be allowed to happen. We need a pause in immigration for a while.

Don't get me wrong. To reduce immigration, or provide a moratorium or time-out, is not to suggest that many immigrants do not become hard working, model citizens. It simply means that the country needs a break to absorb and handle its critical social and internal problems, and clean up its affairs to face the 21st century. It needs to strengthen its national institutions, civilization and culture to withstand the future stresses and strains likely to emerge later this decade.

We've had such immigration breaks in the past. In the early 19th century, and for a good part of the 20th, we've enjoyed sustained periods of very low immigration. And the truth is, sustained pauses have been good for the country and especially good for recent immigrants.

A few in Congress have figured this out. Despite feeling that it would be wonderful to take anyone who wants to come here, they are facing the sad truth that we need to limit immigration significantly to preserve the nation.

But, for the most part, the discordant noise of a bewildered and perplexed national leadership is still drowning out the tough truths needed for a brighter future. While the immigration issue is now firmly on the national radar screen, we may be years away from serious reform. How long can we wait?

by Dan Stein, Executive Director

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diplomatic strategy entails making North Korea an offer it can't refuse. (There is always the chance that Pyongyang, which has spoken from time to time about a "package deal," might accept it.) And so we should offer North Korea full diplomatic relations; a no-first-use pledge about the use of nuclear weapons; and whatever economic assistance it needs for its legitimate energy requirements, including, if necessary, a light water nuclear reactor. Japan and some of the other OECD countries would join in providing the resources for the construction of such a facility.

An offer of this magnitude would be a relatively small price to pay for the termination of North Korea's nuclear enterprise. Actually, all things being equal, the establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea is in our interest as much as it is North Korea's, given the desirability of exposing Pyongyang as much as possible to the realities of the changing world situation. During the 1980s, when Beijing and Moscow had as little to do with Seoul as Washington and Tokyo had to do with Pyongyang, we pursued a policy of "cross recognition," in which the United States and Japan promised to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea if China and the Soviet Union established them with South Korea. Now that Moscow and Beijing have embassies in Seoul, and a thriving trade with South Korea, Washington and Tokyo are still without a diplomatic presence in Pyongyang, and have minimal economic involvement with North Korea. Recognizing Pyongyang without an acceptable resolution of the nuclear issue would be very foolish, since it would give up one of the main cards in our hand; but extending it in a nuclear agreement would be very wise.

KIM JONG IL BY JIM HOLLOWAY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Such an offer would be worth making, moreover, even if Pyongyang rejected it. With North Korea's real intentions—its preference for membership in the nuclear club over normalization of relations with the United States, South Korea and Japan—unambiguously exposed, it would be easier to muster the support, at home and abroad, that will be politically necessary to take the tougher steps, involving sanctions and perhaps even force, that may be necessary to solve the problem.

Instead of rejecting such a proposal out of hand, Pyongyang is more likely to retort that the offer does not go far enough, that what is really needed is a peace treaty to replace the armistice that has existed for the last forty years. With such a treaty, the United States would naturally be expected to withdraw its forces from South Korea. To be sure, the acceptance of such a demand in the absence of a phased and verifiable reduction in the armed strength of both Koreas, and the establishment of an acceptable balance of indigenous power on the Korean peninsula, is unthinkable. The likelihood, anyway, is that the North Koreans will not agree to all of our demands, even if we provide them with diplomatic recognition, security assurances and economic assistance.

What, then, will the North Koreans do? At the worst, they will begin to reprocess the extracted fuel rods when they cool off sometime in August, reload their now empty five megawatt reactor and continue to move forward on their nuclear project. At best, they will agree to terminate a future nuclear program, while insisting that we forgo any effort to make them relinquish the fissile material they have already produced, thereby enabling them to maintain a limited nuclear arsenal of at least one or two atom bombs. Each of these possible actions on the part of Pyongyang needs to be carefully analyzed, since each calls for a somewhat different reaction.

If North Korea once again repudiates its pledges and goes ahead with its nuclear project, we will have no choice but to impose sanctions. Yet we must recognize that sanctions are not likely to be effective in persuading Pyongyang to accept the proposal that would presumably still be on the table. North Korea already has the most autarchic economy in the world. And it is better positioned than Iraq and Cuba, which have resisted sanctions, for three years and thirty, to go it alone.

But the real problem with sanctions is that their effectiveness is almost wholly dependent on China, which provides Pyongyang with up to 80 percent of its oil, and is the only country with which North Korea has any significant economic relationship. Fearing that sanctions will be ineffectual at best and counterproductive at worst, Beijing does not want to risk either precipitating a collapse of the North Korean regime or alienating its only remaining Communist ally in Asia. Even if it abstained on a U.N. Security Council vote to impose sanctions, which is by no means certain, China is unlikely to close its border with North Korea.

In the event that diplomacy and sanctions fail, the only remaining recourse would be the use of force. Just as Israel destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak in

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Iraq, such a scenario would require the United States to launch a surgical strike against the North Korean nuclear complex at Yongbyon. From a technical and military perspective, such an operation is feasible. We have the capacity, using a combination of cruise missiles and stealth bombers, to render North Korea's nuclear facilities inoperable. And if we were to launch an attack when its reactor and reprocessing facilities were empty, as they are now, the spread of radioactive materials beyond the Yongbyon complex could be greatly diminished, if not entirely eliminated.

Here is where the worst-case scenario starts getting spun. With more than 1 million men under arms just north of the demilitarized zone, and with its artillery batteries within easy range of Seoul, the continued quiescence of North Korea's frontline troops cannot be taken for granted. The use of force is likely to provoke a retaliatory response that could have catastrophic consequences. There is a real possibility that it could lead to another major military conflict on the Korean peninsula. The United States and South Korea would undoubtedly prevail, but the cost of victory in blood and treasure would be high. So high, in fact, that there are few people in the corridors of power in Washington, Tokyo or Seoul prepared to seriously consider the military option.

Yet this worst-case scenario may be deeply flawed. The North Korean regime is immoral and irresponsible, but it is not suicidal. Some kind of retaliation by Pyongyang for an attack on Yongbyon would probably be inevitable. Still, a full-scale attack against the South, or an artillery barrage against Seoul, is doubtful, given the likelihood that it would result in the destruction of the North and the collapse of its regime. More likely would be a Scud missile attack against one or more of the eleven nuclear reactors in South Korea, or acts of terrorism directed against the United States or Japan. But even here, the notorious inaccuracy of Scuds, and the presumptive protection of Patriot missiles, would almost certainly blunt such an attack. Terrorism would be harder to combat, but also less threatening.

The other possible, and more likely, response to a generous diplomatic offer in Geneva is that North Korea will agree to forgo the future production of fissile material in exchange for a comprehensive package of diplomatic, security and economic benefits. It will also insist that its past program is off-limits, thereby enabling it to keep weapons-grade material already produced. And this will present the United States with a tough choice. We will have to decide whether it is better to cut off North Korea's future production of fissile material at the price of permitting it to keep what it already has, or whether we should insist on total compliance with the NPT and the North-South agreement on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

It is essential to understand that complete compliance with its obligations as a signatory of the NPT will not suffice: North Korea could *continue* to produce fissile material and to extract plutonium from it under the eyes of the inspectors. We must insist, therefore, on the implementation of the North-South Accord on the De-Nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which requires Pyongyang to dismantle its reprocessing facility. Our aim is that North Korea shuts it down and takes it apart. But the future of the North Korean program should concern us more than its past. Our stubbornness should not be misplaced. It would make little sense to let Pyongyang assemble a stockpile of nuclear weapons simply because it refuses to surrender the one or two weapons it already may possess; and in such circumstances it would be better to reach an understanding with Pyongyang in which it is permitted to keep the fissile material it already has in exchange for precluding it from accumulating any more. A single North Korean bomb will not threaten global nuclear stability. Many North Korean bombs will.

Forging a consensus among Washington, Tokyo and Seoul will not be easy. South Korea and Japan, understandably concerned about the possible use of nuclear weapons by North Korea against them, have a greater interest than the United States in preventing Pyongyang from being permitted to keep even one or two atomic bombs. The United States, on the other hand, has a greater interest than Japan or South Korea in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world. Just as another conventional war on the Korean peninsula would be a worst-case scenario from the perspective of Seoul and Tokyo, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by rogue regimes and terrorist groups would be a worst-case scenario from the perspective of Washington. To honor these differing perspectives, the president should tell South Korea and Japan that we would be prepared to reject any North Korean proposal that would leave it with even a minimal atomic arsenal, should Seoul and Tokyo insist that we do so. In exchange, if Pyongyang refuses to abandon its nuclear project, Seoul and Tokyo should agree to the surgical strike that will be necessary to prevent North Korea from becoming a major and mischievous nuclear state. The chances are that the Japanese and the South Koreans will choose a negotiated settlement over a surgical strike, but choose they must.

Time is running out. In August the North Koreans may move their fuel rods and start to reprocess them. In such circumstances, sanctions, which will serve as a warning to other proliferators, will work too slowly to affect this proliferator. The crisis that Carter said was over will then be upon us. What will matter is the determination of the president. If the only way left to stop a nuclearizing North Korea is the use of force, the president should find the will, and the nerve, to order an attack. This will be a difficult decision to make; but if Clinton finds a way to stop North Korea from becoming a nuclear power, he will have established himself as the leader that the post-cold war world needs him to be. A decade from now, if Pyongyang has proceeded with its nuclear project, and sold atomic bombs to Libya, Iran, Syria and Iraq, not to mention terrorist groups and nationalist armies, historians will rightly describe our timidity as one of the greatest and grimmest failures in history. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Different

A surprising number of films have mentally subnormal people as protagonists, but I know of only two in which such a protagonist is seen as a sage or savior. *Being There,* adapted from Jerzy Kosinski's novel, took its odd hero right up to the brink of a presidential nomination. Now comes **Forrest Gump** (Paramount). Made from a novel by Winston Groom, this film follows an Alabaman man with an I.Q. of seventy-five from his schoolboy difficulties through action in Vietnam to postwar wealth and esteem.

Heaven, which presumably gave Forrest his I.Q., also has a hand in his success—and a sense of humor, too. He can run fast so, when he's a youth, a university calls him and he becomes an All-American footballer. In the Army he gets fascinated with Ping-Pong and becomes a champion. After the war he goes into the shrimping business and flops. Then a storm destroys all the competitive shrimping boats roundabout, and Forrest cashes in.

Someone suggests an investment in what Forrest thinks is a fruit business: he likes fruit, so he invests. What he thought was fruit turns out to be Apple computers. At one point, for various reasons, he decides to run back and forth across the U.S.A. for a couple of years. Instead of being regarded as eccentric, he is hailed as a guru and has a band of faithful disciples running behind him. And (thanks to computer graphics) he also has cheery meetings with Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Kosinski's hero was a T.V.-anesthetized subaverage man intended as a satirical comment on a society force-fed with mass culture and manipulated responses. Groom's Forrest is just a boy-man on whom Heaven is smiling—and we're supposed to smile, too, at Heaven's neatness. Heaven's involvement is italicized at the beginning by the descent of a bird's white feather to Forrest's feet and at the end by that feather's skyward rise.

Between the two authors, I'll take Kosinski. Basically Groom is saying, "Who needs intelligence? Keep your heart pure and Heaven will provide. What's more, you'll get a few laughs, and you'll end up rich." Not only rich but the father of a charming child, the result of your only sexual congress, with a woman whom you've adored since you were schoolmates. She has been through a series of moral travails that are a kind of moral analogue of your physical-financial adventures, and after she turns over your child to you, she is considerate enough to die and get out of the way.

I can't see how people with low I.Q.s or those who love them are in any way comforted by all this hogwash. I can easily see how such people might be offended by its smug unreality.

Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, apparently because he wanted a role that would be as far off the beaten track as the one in his last picture, *Philadelphia.* Hanks is exceptionally gifted, and he plays Forrest well enough; but the role doesn't call for anything like the variety and resource that Debra Winger needed—and had—for her comparable role in *A Dangerous Woman.*

Robin Wright is acceptable as the woman who winds in and out of Forrest's life. The best performance comes from Gary Sinise, sinewy and vitriolic, as the lieutenant whom Forrest meets in Vietnam and who later joins him on the shrimp boat. Robert Zemeckis directed Eric Roth's adequately carpentered screenplay with undistinguished competence.

That sort of competence, insipid and ubiquitous, is made to seem all the more bland by a new documentary about François Truffaut. Some of Truffaut's latter-day films were less than successful, but his documentary made me realize how much I miss the chance to see new work by him. (He died in 1984.) The Zemeckis competence—for "Zemeckis," many other names, domestic and foreign, could be substituted—is a pretty poor replacement for individual talent, which was part of a generation of individual talents. A sense of style and self is not visible in many of their successors.

François Truffaut: Stolen Portraits (Myriad) was made by Serge Toubiana, editorial director of *Cahiers du Cinéma,* and Michel Pascal, a film critic and the cultural editor of *Le Point.* The form they use is familiar and quite suitable: a series of interviews intercut with relevant clips from Truffaut films and T.V. appearances. The interviews are of course braided, rather than letting each one run through to its finish, and each one gives us something of value—whether it's fact or character and color. For

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Boys of St. Vincent. *Fiction based on fact. A pair of films on the abuse of boys in a Canadian Catholic orphanage. Good performances, but it's more about a friar's psychopathy than about the trials of celibacy. (Reviewed 7/4/94)* **Four Weddings and a Funeral.** *Richard Curtis, who wrote this sprightly British comedy-romance, also wrote the sprightly "The Tall Guy" (Emma Thompson and Jeff Goldblum are in it), which was ignored. Revival, please? (4/4/94)* **Freedom on My Mind.** *A well-fashioned documentary, ironic yet encouraging, about the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, 1964, its history and fate. (6/27/94)* **White.** *A wry, sexy morality tale. Adventures of a Polish hairdresser in Paris and Warsaw, out to recapture his divorced wife. Utterly, mordantly European. (6/13/94)* **—SK**

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example, the interviews with Madeleine Morgenstern, Truffaut's widow, and their two daughters, Eva and Laura, give us valuable glimpses of the private Truffaut but are equally interesting in what they reveal of the man just through the feelings of these three lovely women.

The film begins—inevitably, we assume—with Gérard Depardieu, and it ends with him, speaking almost breezily but affectionately about a man whom, he says, he will always miss. Jeanine Bazin, widow of the French film critic André Bazin, tells how they took in the young and troubled Truffaut to live with them for two years, and how much they all laughed while he was with them. Robert Lachenay, a Truffaut friend since childhood, tells of their shared passion for film, their adventures with a cinema club. Lachenay, we're told, provided some of the elements in the character of Antoine Doinel in *The 400 Blows.* Antoine is a blend of Lachenay and Truffaut.

Everyone speaks affectionately of Truffaut, but some bring out less than flattering sides. Jean Gruault, the screenwriter who worked on *Jules and Jim, The Wild Child* and others, tells us by indirection, with a quotation from Céline, that Truffaut knowingly composed his public character. Several, Claude Chabrol and Jean-Louis Richard among them, speak of Truffaut's ravenous appetite for bourgeois life and *luxe.* (Perhaps this is what brought about the notorious breach between Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard in 1968. Godard is absent from this film.)

The biggest surprise has to do with Truffaut père. Anyone who knows the films has seen this artist's canted attitude toward women, a strange blend of worship and distrust that presumably originated in his disturbed relationship with his mother; and it's also clear that many of his films yearn for the paternal, either on the screen as in *The Wild Child,* where Truffaut himself plays the teacher of the savage boy, or in the director-cast relationship, as with the children in *Small Change.* (No director ever handled children better than Truffaut.)

The documentary tells us that the paternal void in his life troubled him. His mother's husband was not his father: she was pregnant when she married. Years later Truffaut engaged a private detective, interviewed here, to find out who his real father was. He turned out to be a Jewish dentist. (My one link with Truffaut!!! *My* father was a Jewish dentist.)

The biological father is not in the film, but the twenty-five relatives and friends who are seen collaborate in a fine portrait. Beyond fact and flavor, the film captures another element: a sense of the community of the so-called New Wave, which began around 1958 and which is now, what's left of it, a Gray Wave. In human and in film-historical terms, this Toubiana-Pascal documentary is a treasure. It ought to be shown wherever there's a Truffaut audience, and it ought to be made available on tape. •

The Buried Life

By Ian Hamilton

One Art: Letters by Elizabeth Bishop edited by Robert Giroux

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 668 pp., $35)

For most of her writing life, Elizabeth Bishop was known for not wishing to be known. Where other poets muscled their careers to center-stage, she hovered in the wings. Where others importuned their audience with news of their private sorrows, she remained impressively tight-lipped. A near-contemporary of the so-called confessional poets, poets such as Robert Lowell and John Berryman, she once said of them: "You just wish they'd keep some of these things to themselves."

"Closets, closets and more closets" was Bishop's response to the gay liberation movement. Her friends knew that she was lesbian, and also that she was alcoholic, but she herself liked to believe that each of these dispositions was a secret. Certainly her poems gave no clues. And since Bishop spent most of her career outside the United States, mostly in Brazil, and took little part in homeground literary politics, there was not much word of mouth to go on. Her geographical self-exile seemed perfectly in tune with her habits and her

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demeanor as a poet.

Bishop died in 1979, aged 68, prize-laden and greatly respected by her fellow poets. "A poet's poet's poet" was James Merrill's well-known tag. And yet she was still thought of as somehow marginal to the action. Austere and almost fiddlingly skillful, more interested in places than people, detached almost to the point of authorial invisibility, she was there to be invoked as a cool, neoclassical alternative to the various slacknesses and excesses of the moment: excessive avant-gardism, excessive self-exposure, excessive political engagement and so on. There was nothing excessive about Bishop. For her, it seemed, there was an active virtue to be found in self-forgetfulness, in saying "look at that" instead of "look at me."

DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

And now we have the letters, the biography, the "oral testimony" of acquaintances, onlookers, colleagues, and they reveal a life filled almost to ruination by excess. Drink, sexual passion, sickness, suicides: Bishop, it turns out, had much to hide, or thought she did. At first, it is as if we've been given the low-down on the secret practices of some formidably righteous aunt. After a bit, though, we are glad that we have been told. For primary among Bishop's excesses was a yearning for the non-excessive, for the pleasures and the reassurances of the low-key, the repetitive, the known. In the light of what we now learn of her personal disorders, we can more widely respond to the obliquities of her determinedly well-ordered work. We can even conclude that the question of self-revelation (how much to tell and how to tell it?), far from not mattering to her, was almost always at the heart, or near the heart, of what she wrote.

Robert Giroux takes the title of his edition of Bishop's letters from a late poem called "One Art," which ends:

> I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
> next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
> The art of losing isn't hard to master.
>
> I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
> some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
> I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.
>
> —Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
> I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
> the art of losing's not too hard to master
> though it may look like (*Write* it!) like disaster.

Thanks to biography, we now know that this poem was written in delayed response to a catastrophe, a major turning point in Bishop's life: the death by suicide of Lota de Macedo Soares, with whom she had lived in South America for fifteen years. Knowing this, we can work out what Bishop means by "two cities," "three loved houses," "a continent." And the line about losing her mother's watch assumes a new forcefulness when we know about the poet's childhood. Bishop's father died when she was a baby. When she was 5, her mother was removed to an insane asylum. Brought up by grandparents, Bishop never saw her mother again (she died in 1934, when Bishop was 23).

Such knowledge indeed helps us to "understand" the poem better. But we have not understood it at all if we fail at the same time to register how hard it was for Bishop to speak about these things in poems. She tells herself to "*Write* it!" but she has not, in this case, written it. She can't. Hence her employment of the villanelle, a form that encourages the jaunty-grim, that deals in general wisdom. As well as knowing the biographical background of the poems (written some eight years after Lota's death and sparked by the seeming failure of a new relationship), we also know, from Brett C. Millier's excellent new life, that the text went through seventeen drafts: "... each version of the poem," says Millier, "distanced the pain a little more, depersonalized it, moved it away from the tawdry self-pity and 'confession' that Elizabeth disliked in many of her contemporaries."

She may have disliked it, but it made her think. Perhaps these sufferers who stared only at the mirror were closer to real poetry than she was. Robert Lowell, certainly, knew how to "*Write* it!" and knew also how to rise above self-pity; at his best, he was as accurate and as intelligent as Bishop was. This worry about content was not new. When Bishop put together *North & South*, her first book, she fretted that in wartime, her precise, absorbed, descriptive sketches would seem disengaged, that she was strong on adjectives and nouns and weak on verbs. And later on, watching a sandpiper pecking at a beach, she only half-admires the creature's rapt certainty of purpose:

> The world is a mist. And then the world is
> minute and vast and clear. The tide
> is higher or lower. He couldn't tell you which.
> His beak is focused; he is preoccupied
>
> looking for something, something, something.

But what's the point of looking if you don't know what you are looking *for*?

> Poor bird, he is obsessed!
> The millions of grains are black, white, tan, and gray,
> mixed with quartz grains, rose and amethyst.

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For poets, sooner or later, there was always a "So what?"—or so she feared.

In the beginning, though, for Bishop the joys and the skills of simple observation seemed sufficient. Her first literary mentor was Marianne Moore, herself famous as (in Moore's words) "one of those who despise clamor about substance." Bishop and Moore met in the substance-full 1930s, and each found an enjoyable delinquency in concentrating on the local, the miniature, the usually unnoticed. In a period dominated by vehemence and theory, they liked to cultivate an art of the curious specific. They kept smiling, or half-smiling, while everyone around them sported masks of doom.

When Bishop introduced herself to Moore, whose work she had admired in college ("Why had no one ever written about *things* in this clear and dazzling way before?"), there was an inevitable awkwardness on both sides. Bishop was in her early 20s, Moore in her mid-40s, and both ladies were well-buttoned-up. The ice was broken when Bishop offered to take Moore to a circus. "I didn't know that she *always* went to the circus." Together they watched "bears on roller skates and a Chinese family who played cards and ate while hanging by their hair on hooks." Soon after, they discovered that the circus was not the only offbeat interest they shared. They were both crazy about snakes, tattoos, semi-precious stones, exotic flowers and birds, dress-making, recipes. A friendship was launched that for five years would dominate the younger poet's idea of what poetry could be. As Moore saw it, poetry could be whatever it turned out to be: no more, no less. For the young Bishop, strong on visual detail, weak on subject matter, this news came as a relief, and a release.

Bishop's earliest letters to Moore are bouncy, chatty, eager to impress but lightly so. They are marked, really, by Bishop's sheer pleasure in having discovered a senior soul mate. Accounts of Bishop as a schoolgirl or undergraduate at Vassar present her as cagey, shrewd, aloof—witty but not cheerful. Mary McCarthy, a college-mate, spoke of envying "the mind hiding in the words, like an 'I' counting up to 100 waiting to be found." At least something of the youthful Bishop "I" showed through in her dealings with Moore, a mother-figure who lived with her mother. As David Kalstone has commented, "What must it have been like, ... for a young woman who had not seen her mother since she was 5 to know an older poet who was inseparable from hers? And to have met Moore in the very year that Bishop's own long-absent mother died." Whenever she visited Moore's "otherworldly" apartment in Brooklyn, Bishop always felt "uplifted, even inspired, determined to be good, to work harder, not to worry about what other people thought, never to try to publish anything until I thought I'd done my best with it, no matter how many years it took—or never to publish at all."

Moore, though, was a natural eccentric. She really did prefer pelicans to people. Bishop's dottiness, not in the least faked but somewhat worked up for Moore's benefit, was never quite central to her personality. She was more of a dreamer, more of a worrier. And she was young, and far more ambitious for literary advancement than she made out; more, maybe, than she knew. Her methods and her aspirations could not for long be fashioned to Moore's model. And neither could her poems. Perhaps she came to feel that Moore's influence encouraged her in habits of detachment. But how to close the gap between the seer and the seen?

When writers of the 1930s worried about "substance," their worry was usually to do with leftist politics—were they sufficiently engaged? Bishop was never attracted to the *Partisan Review* crowd (although she did publish in the magazine), and on certain key issues of the day—the Spanish War, for instance—she was indignantly right-wing. In 1936, when other writers were joining the International Brigade, she was in Spain as a tourist, and wrote to a friend: "If you really want to see what the Communists are up to, what beautiful things they have ruined, you should come here." (This letter is not printed by Giroux, nor is another letter, of 1956, in which Bishop writes about the Rosenbergs: "I believe that the Rosenbergs were a wretched pair of dupes and traitors, and that the hysterical and hypocritical excitement whipped up by the Communist Party about their trial and deaths was just one more example, a particularly unsavory one, of the aims and methods of that Party.")

By the time Bishop settled in Florida in 1938 (she stayed there for nine years), the personality that she was accustomed to excluding from her poems had shaped itself in ways Moore would not approve. She knew she was lesbian, and she knew, too, that Moore was contemptuous of "sodomites." She knew that she was alcoholic and that in New York this could hardly be kept even semisecret. There had already been scenes, embarrassments, blackouts. She also suffered wretchedly from asthma, and needed to be in the sun. This last was a condition that she *was* able to disclose to Moore. In Florida for health reasons, she could enthuse about the scenery, the locals, the ins and outs of daily life. And Bishop is at her most likeable when she's allowed, when she allows herself, merely to chatter on:

> Last week I found such a nice little house to "work in"; a tree on one side and a vine on the other almost hid it. The walls were lemon-pie yellow, and the doors were white with raspberry-pink panels. The woman who was going to rent it to me had it all fixed so nicely—a green table and three chairs, a whatnot with a bunch of wax roses on top, and lots of pictures of movie stars on the walls. But of course she didn't tell me there was a *machine shop* just across the lane.
>
> I put off writing originally because I wanted to send you "something"—a sample, at least—when I did, but I have done NOTHING although I try hard every day, honestly....
>
> The other day I caught a parrot fish, almost by accident. They are ravishing fish—all iridescent, with a silver edge to each scale, and a real bill-like mouth just like turquoise; the eye is very big and wild, and the eyeball is turquoise too—they are very humorous-looking fish. A man on the dock immediately scraped off three scales, then threw him back.... I'm enclosing one [scale], if I can find it. Mrs. A is confronting a huge fish in the kitchen right now—Red Snapper, but it is gilt-rose. Oh how I wish that you and your mother too would sometime visit us, in the two-month Jane Austen style. There are so many things we'd like to show you—only of course we'd be *shown* so many more.

There is a revealing pathos in that "I wanted to send you something," meaning a new poem. In fact, she *has* sent something. The description of the parrot fish is wonderfully alive—and all the more so for not being proffered as a poem, or as a piece of literary writing.

These letters to Moore from Florida will suggest to many readers that Bishop, without knowing it, had chanced upon the answer to her worries about substance, about human content, about involving the self in what is seen. This parsimonious producer of poems wrote several thousand letters. Only a "fraction of her output," says Giroux, is included in this 600-page selection. She once wrote forty letters in a day.

It would be easy to say that letters don't matter, or that Bishop used letters to escape from the more rigorous requirements of her art. It is true enough that she preferred to burble on about parrot fish than face up to the "so what?" of, say, "Parrot fish: a Poem," and she was quite ready to confess that letter-writing was "kind of like working without really doing it." But this was how some poets felt about their poems. With Low-

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ell's work, for instance, she could see that the distinction between poem and letter sometimes became blurred. And Lowell himself, now and then, treated the letters he received as if they were literary texts that he could borrow from, or assimilate into his poems.

When Lowell did this to Elizabeth Hardwick's letters, Bishop was famously outraged. Her reaction now seems odd. Her own letters are by no means as artless as she makes them sound. There is plenty of evidence that she was alert to the genre's literary possibilities: her library was full of collections of letters, and when she taught at Harvard in the 1970s she planned a seminar on "Letters—Readings in Personal Correspondence, Famous and Infamous, from the Sixteenth to Twentieth Century," and had in mind to cover "Mrs. Carlyle, Chekhov, my Aunt Grace, Keats, a letter found in the street, etc." Lowell spoke shrewdly when he predicted that Bishop's letters would one day establish her as "not only one of the best, but also one of the most prolific writers of our century." The shrewdness was in calling her "prolific." No one ever called her *that.*

Perhaps her fury against Lowell's treatment of the Hardwick letters (he quoted chunks of them in a poem-sequence that he wrote about the break up of their marriage) was a fury against his breach of manners—not just the manners owed to Hardwick, but also the manners on which the business of letter-writing hangs. For Bishop there was a decorum here, a code of conduct that had to be protected; otherwise the genre would lose everything about it that was precious. For Bishop, there *was* something precious about a form of writing that was both polite and intimate, that permitted self-revelation but was recognized as private, one-to-one.

In a letter, she knew whom she was addressing. She could exercise social prowess, vanity, charm, triviality of mind; she could manipulate and entertain. Much has been written about Bishop's crippling shyness, and most of the childhood witnesses assembled in *Remembering Elizabeth Bishop: An Oral Biography* testify to her separateness from the main drift: "Elizabeth was kind of odd. She wasn't a girl that mixed very well"; "She thinks, for some reason, she is different from other girls"; "Elizabeth was really different from everyone else." In poems this shyness can issue as an icy reticence, a wish to divert attention from the self. In letters, though, Elizabeth could be one of the gang. She could giggle, exclaim, lecture, exchange recipes, enthuse about home furnishings. And when things got desperate, as they dramatically did for her after the death of her friend Lota, she could even cry:

> Oh WHY WHY WHY didn't she wait a few days? Why did I sleep so soundly?—why why why—I can't help thinking I might have saved her somehow—go over and over that Sunday afternoon but honestly can't think of anything I did especially wrong—except that I have done many wrong things all my life. Please try to keep loving me in spite of them, won't you? I am clinging to my friends desperately.

Bishop's fifteen years with Lota Soares were the best years of her life—well, the first ten were. The letters that she wrote from Brazil after settling there in 1951 are as vivacious as anything she wrote in verse. Her first book had appeared in 1946 and had done well enough to win her a few grants; she had a Time-Life commission to write a book about Brazil. Perhaps for the first time in her life, the way ahead seemed clear. Lota was a forceful protector; she had money, owned the house they lived in and had even built Bishop a study. She was heavily involved in local politics, but in the early years she saw it as her chief role to keep Bishop focused on her writing, to safeguard the poet's health and to restrain her from the bottle. According to a mutual friend, Lota believed that Bishop needed "the affectionate protection of a home, a sense of belonging, the orderly consolations of habit and dailiness, the will to stay put. They became lovers, even if Lota more often acted the mother to Elizabeth the child."

Another mother-figure. And there can be no doubt that for a long time Lota's program worked. The letters poured out, some of them small joyous hymns to domesticity. Repeatedly Bishop's tone is one of buoyant gratitude, as if she had been rescued from a wreck: "I must have died and gone to heaven without deserving to." And there were poems, too—poems more relaxed and rich in human content than anything she had attempted before. The old descriptive flair was still powerfully in evidence, but with a new, more distinctive zest. Landscapes became close-ups, locations became towns in which people live. The influence of Lowell was admitted, though cautiously. Something of his raw human eloquence can be heard in these Brazil poems, but it is always reined in by what Moore used to call Bishop's "instinct against precipitousness":

> The sea's off somewhere, doing nothing.
> Listen.
> An expelled breath. And faint, faint, faint
> (or are you hearing things), the
> sandpipers'
> heart-broken cries.
>
> The fence, three-strand, barbed-wire, all
> pure rust,
> three dotted lines, comes forward
> hopefully
> across the lots; thinks better of it; turns
> a sort of corner...

In this new location Bishop also felt ready to recall episodes from her strange, puzzled childhood, episodes that she had for years kept at a distance. Much of Bishop's "Brazil book," *Questions of Travel,* which appeared in 1965, is set in her birthplace, in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia now seemed like the opposite of where she was—and not just in terms of climate and geography. Her childhood home had never felt like home. She had been shunted from one set of grandparents to another; for a time she lived with her Aunt Maude. Then there was boarding school. She was always a guest in other people's houses, and her mother's absence had never been properly explained. For a long time she had thought she was an orphan. Now that she had found a home, she could afford to ask herself some leading questions. Had she inherited her mother's madness? Why was she unable to give up drink, even with Lota to watch over her?

The Brazil idyll began to fall apart as Bishop and Lota became increasingly

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involved in their very separate careers. Lota was given the job of designing and building a "People's Park" in Rio, a huge, exacting job that left her with little time to supervise the management of Bishop's writing life. Lota became rattier and bossier; Bishop, more mouselike and aggrieved.

In fact, Bishop was not in the least mouselike when it came to the running of her literary career. The notion that she cared nothing for the baubles of Pulitzer and Guggenheim does not survive a reading of these letters. She was well-aware that her distance from the war zone served her well. So, too, did her ingenuous demeanor. She was the safe candidate, unsullied and above the battle. Even as the prizes came her way, moreover, she continued to be thought of as "neglected."

This is not to suggest that her expatriation was strategic. The idea of "living as a poet" in America was, for her, entirely dreadful: the teaching, the readings, the reviewing. And she knew that, if the relationship with Lota failed, she would be dependent on the goodwill of American universities and prize committees. Thus, when the relationship did begin to falter, she held on to it, to the breaking point. In 1966, the year before Lota's suicide, she wrote: "The simple truth is that my darling Lota, whom I still love very much if she'd give me the chance to show it, has been simple hell to live with for five years now—and I'm not exaggerating."

After Lota's death Bishop returned to Brazil on two occasions. The first time, she found to her horror that she was being widely blamed for Lota's death, that some of her much-prized Brazilian friends were not friends of hers at all; they had put up with her because of Lota. There were ugly squabbles about property, and they were made worse when, on her second visit, it was found that Bishop had a new companion, a young American with whom she had been involved when Lota was still living. This new romance could not have been expected to survive Lota's suicide, and it didn't. Bishop's new lover (called by Giroux, a little chillingly, "XY") was of psychotic bent, although at first she had seemed dominant, a masterful acolyte, a keeper. Bishop found herself having to play nursemaid, a role for which she was ill-equipped, as these letters painfully make clear. Bishop is at her least lovable in her descriptions of the strains imposed on her by her sick friend.

After Lota, and after the collapse of her affair with the unfortunate "XY," Bishop's biography makes dismal reading: breakdowns, suicide attempts, drinking jags, worries about money. Giroux prints several of Bishop's letters to her psychiatrist, so we can follow the decline in grisly detail. These letters, though affecting, are also somewhat evasive or self-serving. Looked at as literature, they are unlikely to find their way into the anthologies; but then, after Brazil, there is a general falling-off in the quality of Bishop's letters. The ebullience, the straightforwardness seem just a little forced, as if she is trying to recapture her best form while fearing that it, too, has been lost.

Robert Giroux cuts or excludes several interesting letters referred to in Millier's biography, and in Lorrie Goldensohn's eager but absorbing *Elizabeth Bishop: The Biography of Poetry*. Perhaps he should have been stricter with Bishop's post-Lota miseries, and aimed for a more "literary" coverage of her later years. From those years I would certainly like to have seen Bishop's letter to Lowell about his first sheaf of sonnets ("I am overcome by their sheer volume"). And I also quite like the sound of a letter quoted by Millier in which Bishop says that Diane Wakoski is "writing the kind of poem that she herself had been fighting against all her life." Giroux seems to want Bishop to sound nicer than she sometimes was.

Bishop's final port was Harvard, where—despite the ministrations of a small coterie of worshipful disciples—she felt herself to be neglected, inadequate and, by one or two of the faculty, despised. In her 60s the woman who cherished domesticity found herself lodging in cramped, dingy rooms in a student dormitory. By day, she steeled herself to teach "Advanced Verse Writing" to "all the usual nuts and freaks"—"and yes, there *is* an Elementary or Beginners' or something Verse Writing, too."

In Bishop's last short book, *Geographies III*, there are hints that, had she lived, she might have attempted to follow the instructions of "One Art," simply to "*Write* it!" Poems like "Crusoe in England," "In the Waiting Room" and "The Moose" seem melancholy worlds away from early poems like "Roosters" or "The Map."

> I often gave way to self-pity.
> "Do I deserve this? I suppose I must,
> I wouldn't be here otherwise. Was there
> a moment when I actually chose this?
> I don't remember, but there could have
> been."
> What's wrong about self-pity, anyway?

It seems very doubtful, though, that she would ever have wished to break out into full-blooded candor. Her lifetime's worry about "substance" would have stayed with her to the end. Even the one or two late pieces of hers that have been called "confessional" or "near-confessional" are essentially well-guarded, wry, rueful and resigned. This was how she came across in public, all her life. Letters, she believed, were different. Letters were private. All in all, we can be grateful that they weren't.

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The End of Essences

BY ALAN WOLFE

The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority by John Patrick Diggins

(University of Chicago Press, 528 pp., $29.95)

America has not been hospitable to philosophy, or not as hospitable as, say, France or Germany; but this American lack admits of one exception. The exception is pragmatism. Although the ideas of William James, Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey are insufficiently mind-bending for those steeped in the complexities of Kant or the mysteries of Hegel, those ideas live on. Indeed, there is a pragmatic revival taking place these days (one that has even had an impact on German thought, though not quite on French). At a time when furious epistemological wars are being fought between those who believe that we can know everything and those who believe that we can know nothing, pragmatism appears to some as a third way, a path of sanity.

John Patrick Diggins's book examines the accomplishments of pragmatism.

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and finds them wanting. It is an ambitious work, addressing nothing less than the question of how we can hold beliefs: about existence, about nature, about the self, about power. I admire the scope of Diggins's enterprise and the often brilliant details of the exegesis that he offers. And so I regret to report that sloppy methods, bizarre interpretations and puzzling inconsistencies prevent *The Promise of Pragmatism* from reaching the stature that its subject deserves.

Diggins begins his account of American pragmatism with two thinkers, Henry Adams and Max Weber, one of whom is not a pragmatist and the other of whom is not an American. His belief is that ideas matter more than the conditions that inspire them. Why not, then, imagine a conversation that might have taken place between great thinkers who, because of accidents of time and place, never had a chance to talk?

Adams, in particular, is the ghost of *The Promise of Pragmatism.* Diggins argues that Adams is poorly treated by American historiography because "his mocking presence seems an insult to the nation's creed of optimism and progress, an intellect that erodes whatever it touches." Yet Adams anticipated, according to Diggins, our current preoccupation with knowledge and authority. Modernity, for Adams, unleashed fantastic energy and power, but it provided no authority to control what it wrought. Religion, politics, society, even science cannot yield a rational principle of obedience to forces that operate by laws of their own. "Adams was the first scholar in the Western world to relate developments in physics to the study of history in an effort to show that there could be no such thing as a stable equilibrium when phenomena are irreversible and events random."

The genius of Adams, in Diggins's account, is that he recognized that political authority had disappeared and that not even religious mysticism, to which Adams was attracted, could bring it back. Compared to Adams, the pragmatists demonstrated a massive failure of nerve. For they made two mistakes that Adams was careful to avoid. They believed that society could provide "rightful" (Weber would say "legitimate") authority, and that power could be used constructively if unleashed in the right direction. "Henry Adams would be intellectually incapable of following the rest of American culture in making the transition from modernism to pragmatism. Why? He knew too much." What Adams knew—and the pragmatists did not—was that power was mindless, or, alternatively, possessed of a mind of its own. Adams, in Diggins's view, "looms as an American counterpart to Friedrich Nietzsche." He was the first great American thinker to stare meaninglessness in the face and accept it as the tragic condition of modern man.

This method of contrasting the pragmatists to a thinker who saw the same problems yet provided more nuanced solutions makes a good deal of sense; but Adams is not that thinker. The very idea that physics can tell us anything about the organization of society is ludicrous. Adams, a great historian, never developed, like Weber, a systematic account of how history moves, his "virgins" and "dynamos" notwithstanding. Adams was out of touch with the forces of modernity whose effects he witnessed. The stuff of the modern problem of authority—the yearning of masses of people for a stake in determining their fate—was beyond him.

Comparing Adams to Nietzsche also gives pause. Unlike the pragmatists, it is true, both Adams and Nietzsche were corrosive critics of can-do philosophy; but there the similarity ends. Nietzsche, for all his epigrammatic lyricism, was a rigorous philosophical thinker, who anticipated the limits of the answers given by the pragmatists even before they asked the questions. Adams solved the problem of authority by ignoring the dilemmas of modernity. Nietzsche anticipated those dilemmas. For all of Diggins's efforts at reconstruction, Adams remains premodern in sensibility and in style.

Diggins's dichotomy between the sagacious Adams and the more superficial pragmatists fails not only because he overestimates Adams's intellectual power, but also because James, Peirce and Dewey wrestled with questions of mind, knowledge, politics and communication that were well beyond Adams's interest and reach. Each of these thinkers addressed somewhat different issues in different ways; each of them had strengths and weaknesses; none of them solved the problems that preoccupied them; but they all possessed a philosophical seriousness that was quite alien to Adams.

James's humanism, Diggins is right to insist, stands in sharp contrast to Adams's mechanistic speculations. James, who was trained in medicine, believed that science was relevant to an understanding of the human condition, but he shifted to an interest in psychology and especially religion out of a conviction that science, in itself, cannot provide answers to intractable problems of human existence. The human mind was an active force for James, transforming reality as artists transform inert materials into things of beauty. Like the New England Transcendentalists who preceded him, especially Emerson, James prized the self—the inward-looking, often heroic individual standing in opposition to the institutions of modern society.

James argued against both materialism and idealism, as Diggins points out. The human being and the mind were not part of some vast universe of interlocked parts; but neither was mind something that stood apart from reality and recorded its essence. The world, rather, is a continuous state of flux, and so it can be grasped only through experience. We bring as much to the world as the world brings to us. Because truth is made, not found, justifications of authority based on received wisdom are no longer credible. But this does not mean, Adams notwithstanding, that no authority exists. Liberated intelligence, the search of the self for a truer consciousness, can serve as an appropriate guide to what is right and what is real, so long as individuals possess James's famous "will to believe."

Diggins treats James's effort to find a new source of belief beyond scientific empiricism sympathetically, but he does not believe that James succeeded. Only so much can be willed. Having disconnected meaning from reference, truth from foundations, the mind from the brain, and belief from religious authority, James could do no more than plead with his readers to believe in themselves. "In the end James's religious philosophy can only be regarded as a deep personal conviction that the universe still had divine dimensions that answered to man's need for order," Diggins writes. Such a vision may be inspiring, but as a philosophical solution to the problem of the loss of authority it was hopeless.

Peirce, ignored for years as James was celebrated, is increasingly viewed as an American genius, a man almost incapable of making his way in the world, yet one who anticipated, and provided credible solutions for, some of the most intractable philosophical issues of the late twentieth century. Like others who would come to be called pragmatists, Peirce accepted the fact that modernity disallowed inherited systems of fixed belief. But this did not, as it did for James, produce a crisis of conscience. It produced, more precisely, a quiet confidence that reason could still guide human beings to the truth. "Philosophy tries to understand," he wrote. "In so doing, it is committed to the assumption that things are intelligible, that the processes of nature and the processes of reason are one."

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Peirce wrote about every subject under the sun, often while his chaotic personal life was crumbling around him, but his most enduring legacy was to suggest that the rules of language and communication, the nature of signs, can provide rational access to truth. Although both Peirce and James are called pragmatists, their understandings of understanding could hardly be more distinct. If James imagines an isolated individual inwardly exploring his own mental powers, Peirce stresses that systems of communication require communities that can check, and can reject, notions that cannot survive their procedures of verification. Scientific communities, in particular, cannot be satisfied with false notions; true ideas will emerge out of scientific intuition in, as Diggins puts it, a kind of Darwinian struggle for survival.

Peirce's ideas may seem naïve in a time in which scientific fraud is rampant and the similarity between science and art is every day more clear. Diggins rightly points out that scientific consensus does not establish the truth, but only "the criterion of agreement about what is believed to be true." And yet he is generous in his treatment of Peirce: "He came closer than any modern American thinker to resolving the crisis of intellectual authority without resorting to older philosophical doctrines, simple religious doctrines or the traditionally coercive 'method of authority' itself." Diggins wishes that Peirce and Adams could have known each other's work; and since they did not, "American history missed a potentially great intellectual confrontation."

Of all the pragmatists, the one who stood furthest apart from Adams, surely, was Dewey. Whereas Adams saw in nature raw force and meaninglessness, Dewey saw possibility and opportunity. Like James, Dewey understood the quest for eternal transcendence as a product of "man's distrust of himself." Reality is not some objective property out there in the world, it is a product of the way in which intelligent human beings experience their environment. We know that ideas are true when practical experience demonstrates their truth. Fed up with epistemology, which he once called "intellectual lockjaw," Dewey found authority in any open-ended system that relied on trial and error to adjust and to correct ideas in new circumstances. Foremost among these methods of adjustment and correction were science and democracy: both were committed to process rather than substance, both were concerned more with what works and less with what is good or eternal. Seeing no conflict between democracy and science, Dewey viewed the people, in moments of enthusiasm, as the ultimate locus of authority.

There are obvious differences, not only between Dewey and Adams, but also between Dewey and James. Although it misrepresents the nuances of both men's ideas to make this distinction, James was more of a liberal and Dewey was more of a democrat. James stands in the direct path of the American suspicion of collectivities: one can hear in his writings echoes of Natty Bumppo and Captain Ahab, Thoreau and Emerson. He looks backwards to an America that is rapidly disappearing. Dewey, by contrast, gives voice to the crowd, not to the lone voice the crowd is shouting down. James is a psychologist, whereas Dewey is a sociologist. For Dewey, authority lies in what large collectivities decide, as well as in individual consciences. James conveys the solitary world of the private; Dewey seeks the realization of private freedom in public actions.

Diggins admires Dewey, whose thought represents "one of the noblest efforts in modern democratic philosophy." Yet he concludes that the further Dewey moved from nature toward politics and ethics, the more problematic became his faith in collective processes. Diggins cites many of the inconsistencies that other philosophers have found in Dewey's ideas: false ideas can be more useful than true ones; experience can justify the barbaric as well as the practical; an attack on absolutes can easily turn into an absolutist position.

And to these Diggins adds two important criticisms of his own. Though Dewey praised experience, Diggins points out, there is no room in his thought for history. Since the truth of ideas would be determined after the event, we are always anticipating the future, not interpreting the past. But our century, the century of pragmatism, has found the past inescapable: World War II had something to do with World War I, communism cannot be understood apart from fascism, and so on. To be an effective moral and political being, individuals have to act before the results are in. Dewey himself took positions on political events based on what he knew from earlier times, not on what he anticipated the future would bring. "The more the grim realities of history caught up with Dewey," Diggins writes, "the less pragmatic he became." If pragmatists cannot practice the rules of pragmatism, why should anyone else?

Moreover, Dewey's four commitments—to nature, to politics, to science, to community—are not consistent. As a result, he applies his belief in process to some areas but not to others, and he never tries to resolve the tensions. His educational philosophy praised spontaneity and the benefits that would come from growth and development, while his economic ideas, distrustful of the market and its tendency to grow haphazardly, emphasized direction and control. Dewey was anything but an apologist for the New Deal; he was critical of Roosevelt's reforms for being, of all things, too experimental and haphazard. The result, as Diggins puts it, is that "Dewey's epistemology could give little support to his politics."

In some of his most penetrating comments Diggins traces the similarity between Dewey's thought and the ideas of George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley, who helped found American sociology in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Stressing the democratic side of pragmatism rather than the liberal one, those writers brought pragmatism full circle from Jamesian individualism. For Mead and Cooley, the self eventually collapsed into the society that created it; institutions, once feared, are now to be welcomed. Dewey, for all his talk of spontaneity, was a believer, in Diggins's biting words, in "redemption by socialization." This strand of pragmatism idealized the consensus of small-town America.

Diggins argues that this was a mistake that could never have been made by anyone who had understood Sherwood Anderson or Eugene O'Neill. American literature provides all the ingredients that American pragmatism lacks, including, in Diggins's appropriate list, "aesthetic insight, moral vision, irony, tragedy, catharsis, negative capability, sensate discourse, beauty and sublimity, fear and pity." In his most damning words of all, Diggins writes that "pragmatism gives us sociology when we ask for poetry." It ends where Adams was afraid it would go. Rightly understanding that modernity can no longer provide authoritative guidance to what is true, beautiful or just, pragmatism concludes that the authoritative source for our beliefs lies in the communities to which we belong. Such communities, however, lack purpose; they neither embody historical tradition nor protect individual voices. Pragmatism provides no solution to the question of what we should believe when we no longer believe in ends or purposes; it simply announces the problem as the definition of our fate.

"Does pragmatism work?" asks Diggins in the opening of his book. "To raise that question risks going against the American grain." By the time he is finished

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with Dewey and those influenced by him, Diggins has set the stage for a definitive, if troubling, answer. That answer, had he developed it in full, would have gone like this: pragmatism in America was a noble experiment, but it was never able to find a credible substitute that could provide an authoritative basis for knowledge and truth. As a result, we must accept the paradoxical conclusion that free inquiry can only lead us back to respect for foundations. If we find those foundations in God, tradition or history, we call ourselves conservative. If we find them in the individual or in forms of rational inquiry, we call ourselves liberals. But in both instances we have been set free to appreciate experience only to bind ourselves to rules and disciplines once more. There is no escaping the need to ground knowledge in something outside our ways of knowing, even if, as modern individuals, we now realize how much more difficult this task has become.

Diggins starts his answer along these lines. Just as he opens with Adams, he turns to other thinkers whose appreciation of irony stands in sharp contrast to pragmatic optimism: Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Lippmann, Lionel Trilling. In their reaction against mass society, New York intellectuals—incapable of accepting the small-town pieties of middle America—rediscovered the fundamental liberal idea that authority, if it is not to lie with tradition and fixed belief, can only lie in the autonomy of the individual self. To the degree that liberal autonomy is accepted, the pragmatic compromise, at least the communitarian one represented by Peirce and Dewey, becomes impossible. By the late 1950s pragmatism as a philosophical moment had passed, even if it lived on in decayed form as an intellectual rationale for Kennedy administration liberalism.

Yet this is not how Diggins ends his book. In recent years pragmatism has experienced a revival in the thought of Richard Rorty and others. The degree to which Rorty is building on pragmatism is hotly contested. To be sure, Rorty is a pluralist and a liberal in the Deweyan tradition, but not everyone is as convinced as Rorty that Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault are also part of that conversation. At the start of his book Diggins is rightly skeptical of any such claims. He writes that "the effort made in recent years to connect American pragmatism with more modern developments in European thought provokes curiosity but suspends credulity." *American pragmatism* emphasizes the rational evolutionary nature of the universe, while contemporary European thought denies all possible transcendental meanings; between these two poles of thought "lies a world of difference."

By the time Diggins is finished, however, the world of difference has disappeared. "Dewey's repudiation of the whole notion of truth as an enduring idea capable of being directly present to the mind amounted to announcing the 'end' of philosophy long before Heidegger or Wittgenstein, as Rorty has argued," Diggins writes. Rorty, we are now told, "has some grounds" for his argument that Dewey anticipated Heidegger. For although there are obvious differences between Dewey and Foucault, or between Dewey and Derrida, they all "remain skeptical of authority as a commitment to something external, whether it be reality, objectivity or causality."

Diggins, in short, accepts the claim that pragmatism is alive and well in contemporary thought. Even more oddly, he endorses it. Deconstruction and postmodernism, no matter how European their origins, resonate with ideas that are fundamentally American, according to Diggins. Three crucial ideas are central to the postmodern outlook: the ubiquity of power, the instability of language, the rejection of foundationalism. From Diggins's perspective, it all sounds like the Founding Fathers, whose efforts to create constitutional government were premised on a suspicion of power and an understanding of the ambiguities of language. Later writers, including historians such as Charles Beard and Carl Becker, would attack the Founders, but they, too, anticipated postmodernism in their efforts to "deconstruct" the founding moment itself. Adams, the American Nietzsche, can be grouped together with Niebuhr, the American Heidegger, who "was something of a poststructuralist before the term came into being." At one point Diggins even includes the New England Calvinists as precursors of poststructuralism. Postmodernism did not have to wait for Foucault and Derrida; it was lying there in America all along. And all roads in American thought lead to Rorty.

In making such an argument, Diggins muddles all the categories that he has so carefully constructed. By the end of the book, we no longer know whose ideas are pragmatic and whose are not, since Rorty, in Diggins's view a neo-pragmatist, is found to share ideas not only with Dewey and James, but also with Adams and Niebuhr, previously upheld as critics of pragmatism. No one in America, it seems, has ever been a Platonist or a Kantian. But if a suspicion of power and a distaste for foundations are as American as apple pie, why did a school called pragmatism develop in the first place? By Diggins's account, James, Peirce and Dewey had no intellectual antagonists, although they clearly thought they did.

Moreover, by accepting the argument that contemporary intellectual currents build on, rather than repudiate, pragmatism, Diggins offers a doubly unsatisfactory account of pragmatism's fate. His argument amounts to this: on the one hand, the most credible efforts to negotiate a pragmatic peace treaty for epistemological wars failed, especially Dewey's; on the other hand, the notion that authority is problematic is now accepted by everyone.

The first of these propositions is partially true. Earlier forms of pragmatism, such as Dewey's, face serious intellectual problems, and Diggins has identified most of them. But they do speak to our time, and they do hold out the possibility of an epistemological compromise. Natural scientists and social scientists still find in them a satisfactory starting point, a place to begin the search for knowledge without the certainty that knowledge will eventually be found. And philosophical pragmatism is alive in the thought of Hilary Putnam. Pragmatism remains the best available alternative to both scientific hubris and epistemological defeatism.

Diggins's second point is wrong on nearly all counts. Even if contemporary forms of poststructuralism succeed, their success would tell us little about pragmatism, because the European imports that are so popular at the moment do not attach the same importance to meaning, science, mind and society that the pragmatists did. Pragmatism was a heroic effort to rescue Enlightenment from skepticism and relativism; deconstruction reviews those efforts and pronounces them hopeless.

Why, then, does Diggins use his critical intelligence so artfully on the pragmatists that matter a lot and expend so little on the "pragmatists" that matter a little? My answer is not especially charitable. It is that Diggins is, finally, in the service of postmodernism. Only someone under the sway of postmodernism could rip thinkers out of the time and place in which they wrote, as if the ideas put on paper by them have nothing to do with the conditions under which they wrote them. This may seem like an odd method for a historian, but Diggins is cheerful about his unorthodoxy. "This work," he informs the reader, "obviously sins against the contextualist's commandments by violating the canons of authorial intent and ignoring the historically conditioned character of texts." Diggins's approach, in other words, is more a language game than a history of ideas, an ingenious but ultimately frus-

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trating effort to play one man's words against another.

But there are good reasons for historians to invoke the commandments against which Diggins sins. Context is a form of foundationalism. History limits the plasticity of experience; the fact that things happen one way forecloses the possibility that they might have happened another way. In a world in flux, traditional historians believe, history can give guidance if we follow carefully constructed rules of historical scholarship. Two of those rules are particularly important: appreciating the limits that chronological time imposes on human action and getting the facts right.

Had Diggins developed greater respect for context, he might have recognized that Dewey's concept of "warranted assertability" is light-years from Plato, but it is also far from the hermeneutics of suspicion. Dewey's project was to give philosophy new tasks, not to abolish it. "No doubt Dewey would be aghast to see the poststructuralist's critique of science, language, education, social intelligence and the promises of inquiry," Diggins writes. "But in a theoretical sense all this is beside the point." For the point, as Diggins sees it, is that Rorty is free to choose anything from Dewey, as indeed Diggins is free to choose anything he wants from anyone. And it all climaxes in Rorty because he provides the intellectual justification for the kind of history that Diggins wants to write.

Then there is the matter of facticity. Footnotes, as Gertrude Himmelfarb has written, carry "a large burden of responsibility," since getting the documentation right is what gives historians authority to speak. Diggins makes an inexcusable number of mistakes (John Rawls did not write a book called *A Theory of Social Justice*, many names are misspelled). In a similarly sloppy way, Diggins begins one chapter by claiming that "Dewey offered the most comprehensive case against authority in modern intellectual history," only to write, later in the same chapter, that Dewey, although a lover of freedom, "was no less a philosopher of authority," citing Dewey's words that "the need for authority is a constant need of man." Proofreading is one good defense against postmodernism.

The shoddy workmanship, the intellectual inconsistencies and the conceptual confusions that mark Diggins's otherwise thought-provoking book have one final consequence. By surrendering to postmodern methods, Diggins undermines any claim that he himself might have to speak with authority. What began as an effort to explore how and why we know what we know becomes, in the end, just a story. And it is an incoherent story. Should we fault the pragmatists for insisting that we can get by in the world without established foundations for our beliefs? Or should we reject them because they still believed we could have beliefs? Diggins characteristically endorses both points of view. His book offers to judge pragmatism by its own standards, but those standards can also be used to judge his book. Does *The Promise of Pragmatism* work? The answer, alas, is no. "To Rorty," Diggins writes, "the core of American identity lies not in flight but in talk." To Diggins, too.

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The Icon and the Hacks

BY THOMAS P. HODGE

Musorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue by Richard Taruskin

(Princeton University Press, 407 pp., $35)

> Russia cannot be known with the mind,
> Cannot be gauged with some general measure:
> She has a special character—
> Russia can only be *believed in*.

In the autumn of 1866 the urbane Fyodor Tyutchev, one of Russia's most revered nineteenth-century poet-truthsayers, wrote that famous one-quatrain guide to his motherland at the twilight of his long literary career. A little over a month before these lines were written, a dissolute, 27-year-old St. Petersburg civil servant and amateur musician named Modest Petrovich Musorgsky composed a tiny song called "Darling Savishna" at the dawn of his short musical career, and that song declared the arrival of a new giant in Russian music. This vocal gem, which lasts a scant minute in performance, was informally characterized by its creator in terms that beg us to reflect on Tyutchev's dictum: "... I see in my sinful mischief an original Russian piece, not one suffused with German profundity and the same old routine, but like 'Savishna,' which sprang forth in our native fields and was reared on Russian bread."

The question of just what was "an original Russian piece" was a burning one, which provoked intense debate and stirred professional enmity. It was a musical question that posed in miniature the chronic identity crisis of Russia. Like the rest of his generation's artists and thinkers, Musorgsky was obsessed with this collective self-interrogation, which continues to the present day. Who are we? and, to the West, Who are you? In his music of the 1860s and '70s, Musorgsky went on to answer these questions with more roiling creativity, more cultural idiosyncrasy, more chilling reflection—in short, with more sheer genius—than any Russian before or since. Few who know Russian music would argue strenuously against the proposition that Musorgsky is the quintessential Russian composer.

Any artist answering to such a description is bound to be a problem. As Dmitry Shostakovich, his most talented twentieth-century disciple, once put it, "That's what Musorgsky's music is like—it's always alive, too alive (if such a quality can ever be excessive)—and that means that an argument, with citizens grabbing each other by the lapels, is not far behind." Consider the aforementioned masterpiece, "Darling Savishna," whose genesis a close friend of Musorgsky's described in the year of the composer's death:

> He was standing once by the window when he was impressed by something going on under his eyes. An unhappy idiot was declaring his love to a young woman who had attracted him; he was pleading with her, though unashamed of his unseemliness and his unhappy condition; he himself understood that he could have nothing in the world—least of all the happiness of love. Musorgsky was deeply impressed; the type and the scene were firmly imprinted on his soul; in a flash there occurred to him the peculiar forms and sounds for the embodiment of the images that were agitating him....

The "forms and sounds" are realized by Musorgsky in a forty-seven-bar song in 5/4 time, in which the vocal line consists of a rapid and uninterrupted series of notes of equal length, supported by an eccentric but mesmerizingly repetitive rhythm in the piano accompaniment

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The ceaseless, nattering entreaties of the rustic fool are alternately whispered *piano* and shouted *forte*, and his language is represented with all the crudities of his odd local dialect; the brisk musical cajoling vividly conjures up the pathetic bowing and blinking of the idiot before his beloved, the ravishing Savishna.

The standard Soviet edition of Musorgsky's vocal music bluntly calls the song "one of his best tragic works." But this sociologically rooted notion of "tragedy" does a great injustice to the complexity of Musorgsky's conception. Fools of this type, called *yurodivye*, were traditionally revered as holy possessions of God, as oracles of divine truth; indeed, some of the most important saints of the Russian Orthodox Church came from the ranks of these "holy fools," and Musorgsky would later compose a leading role in *Boris Godunov* for a similarly afflicted "simpleton." So the fool is perhaps telling us about something much more important than impossible love—say, about the human inability to accept the divine—and we are compelled to listen in the same way we wish Lear had to his Fool. And there is still another strange aspect of the brief piece: the *comedy* inherent in the imbecile's pert sidewalk speech, shouted out before an audience of bemused passers-by. The scene is simultaneously ridiculous and profound, and the dramatic moment is unique in European art-song.

"Darling Savishna" is the perfect Musorgskian piece, saturated with hidden meaning, linguistic richness and Russian custom. Musorgsky wrote his best-known work, *Pictures from an Exhibition*, in an uncharacteristically concentrated burst of creative energy in June 1874. A memorial suite of ten piano miniatures depicting art works by a close friend who had unexpectedly died the previous year, *Pictures* has thrived in a dozen or so adaptations, by far the most inspired being Ravel's orchestration in 1922; but in recent years the original piano suite has gained considerable popularity. (It is best savored in a recent recording, actually a dramatic rethinking, by the pianist Mikhail Pletnev on the Virgin label.) *St. John's Night on Bald Mountain* was originally composed by Musorgsky as a tone poem in 1867, but it achieved its widespread appeal in 1886 in a drastic reworking by Rimsky-Korsakov. Musorgsky's jagged original version, which remained unpublished for a century, resounds in the concert hall more and more often; and his supernatural program for the piece was brilliantly realized on film in the finest episode of Walt Disney's groundbreaking *Fantasia* (1940).

But Musorgsky's masterpiece, of course, is the opera *Boris Godunov*, which the composer adapted from Pushkin's tragedy of 1825 into a searing meditation on kingly guilt and political chaos in Russia at the turn of the seventeenth century. The musical drama is set during the infamous "Time of Troubles," which ushered out Russia's first ruling dynasty and cleared the way for the Romanovs, who stayed on the throne until 1917. Godunov is a talented ruler who reigns in the wake of Ivan the Terrible, but he is doomed to excruciating political and personal failure: to become Tsar, he had ordered the assassination of Ivan's 9-year-old heir, and Godunov—a Russian Macbeth—is destroyed by his conscience. Musorgsky wrote two versions, in 1869 and 1872, and, once again, Rimsky-Korsakov rearranged the original material into the version that would, with the help of bass Fyodor Chaliapin in the title role, make *Boris Godunov* the best-loved of Russian operas. No modern recording comes close to the electricity generated by Chaliapin, this century's greatest singing actor. (For purists, who seek to experience Musorgsky's first treatment of the subject, however, Chicago Lyric Opera will be performing the 1869 version in September 1994, with Samuel Ramey as Godunov.)

These three famous works are just the beginning. Only on acquaintance with such creations as the unfinished operas *Marriage* (after Gogol's play), *Khovánshchina* and *Soróchintsy Fair*, and, above all, with the uncanny universe of Musorgsky's five dozen songs, do we begin to comprehend just how stunning are the depth of the composer's imagination and his skill at projecting it. Unfortunately, Musorgsky tended not to finish many of the bigger things he wrote, and even when he did complete his compositions his better-trained brethren saw fit to step in and arrange, rearrange, transcribe, interpret, augment, cut and otherwise manipulate.

Musorgsky's genius lay in his uncanny ability to project his own mimetic consciousness into an astonishing variety of characters, who constitute a musical gallery of Russian types: a naughty child, a drunken monk, a conniving politician, a xenophilic music critic, a seminary student, a peasant woman awaiting death, or Death itself (or herself, as the Russians say). And the bristling Gogolian energy with which Musorgsky applied his gift has been channeled by a multitude of commentators seeking to bend his legacy to their various ends. In later years he was co-opted by contemporaries struggling to assert a coherent nationalism in Russian music, by the Western-oriented traditionalists who sought primacy in Russia for the Germanic conservatory style, by the Impressionists of French music as a kind of idiot savant who embodied their ideal of uncouth creativity, and by the Soviets as a ready-made musical champion of the oppressed masses. And these are but a few of the citizens with the ragged lapels.

The foremost of these "spin doctors," as Richard Taruskin calls them, was Vladimir Vasil'evich Stasov, the friend quoted above on "Darling Savishna." Stasov acted as Musorgsky's self-appointed guide, spokesman and biographer. He was the chief propagandist for the famed coterie of Russian nationalist composers who came to be known by the phrase that Stasov applied to them in 1867: *Mogúchaia kúchka*. In English, this group of innovative nationalists (Mily Balakirev, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Aleksandr Borodin, Cesar Cui and Musorgsky) is generally called "The Five," "The Mighty Five" or "The Mighty Handful." (Taruskin, a brave and debunking literalist, renders the Russian phrase as "mighty little heap.") Opposing the nationalist faction were the conservatory advocates, led by Anton Rubinstein, who were backed by a phalanx of conservative music critics. And a third voice, the composer Aleksandr Serov, joined the controversy with a position usually described as pro-Wagner.

Serious admirers of Musorgsky are used to adjusting their conception of him. Some of Richard Taruskin's illuminations concern small things: his name, for instance, is properly pronounced MOOSE-ur-skee (not Moose-ORG-skee), and contains the Russian word *músor*, which means "garbage." Others are more significant: his troika of warhorses—*Pictures from* (not *at*!) *an Exhibition*, *St. John's Night on Bald Mountain* and *Boris Godunov*—are known in versions, shaped by other hands, that often have very little to do with what Musorgsky himself left us. This happened, we all learn, because Musorgsky was a terrible drunkard with slovenly work habits who eventually died of alcoholism, in 1891, one week after his forty-second birthday. This is the well-known wretch depicted in Il'ya Repin's portrait, painted in the hospital a few days before the composer succumbed to his vice: we wince sympathetically at the tousled hair, rumpled dressing gown, glazed and tired eyes, the dipsomaniac's ravaged nose.

This figure, however, is just another intermediate step in our advance toward the "real Musorgsky." Thanks to the singular vigor that Russia perpetually displays in building, advertising and guarding the mythologies surrounding its most important art and artists, Musorgsky has

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Hopscotch

I

Beautiful and useless,
borne by the mailman God
in safari mufti; stamped and metered,
sorted for delivery. He trudges up
the brick stoop steps, three, four,
brown knees flashing, white socks
falling. What a day,
what a job, what
a way to make the living
feel alive, the circulars and flyers,
discounted come-ons, the dumb
hum of *now*, urgency's ink.
An afternoon ripped open,
torn at the corner,
shaken fluttering to the floor.
(Tomorrow sealed in another
envelope, late to arrive,
nearly over when it does.)

II

Sun tea and a sprig of mint.
The inevitable ruin of ice.
A calendar divided, ruled by weeks,
tacked to the month's waterfall.
Dear Occupant, Dear Resident,
dear anybody home.

III

Beautiful, yes.
The hopscotch of hours, chalk tossed on ahead.
A chorus, a can-
can, a plague of aluminum
mailboxes kicking up a heel;
the red flag stuck
in semaphore, *something for you*
or *nothing today.*

IV

A dark V of sweat spreads
across his shoulderblades, shirt
rippling with vertebrae,
sinew and strain,
—and striped by the blue
strap of his carry-all,
a cotton diagonal. His back
looks like a flag,
or a country in motion,
flexing its map. (Oh, the long,
dry sentence of an afternoon.)
There he goes, across
the street, climbing
the neighbor's walk, stairs, porch,
five, six, screened from the vicious
barking of the self
left alone.

Alan Michael Parker

been cocooned under an especially thick layer of tendentious windings. Prominent among the most ardent unravelers (and unRavelers) has been a group of non-Russian scholars bent on establishing the *ístina* ("actual" truth) of Musorgsky at the expense of his fossilized *právda* (the "correct" truth).

This healthy enterprise was pioneered more than fifty years ago by Gerald Abraham in England, and it has been superbly extended since the 1970s by his professed American disciple Richard Taruskin, whose new book reaffirms his position as the pre-eminent American historian of Russian music. He is a scholar who pursues the "real Musorgsky" with beguiling zest, deep erudition, abiding philology and thoroughly appropriate irreverence. *Musorgsky*, a collection of seven previously published studies bookended by two new essays, belongs on the shelf of all professional Russianists and students of Russia; but it will also be read with considerable relish by non-music-specialists and non-scholars who simply wonder about the enigmas of Russian high culture at one of its most staggering zeniths, who appreciate scholarly detective work and crave the sting of impassioned ideological warfare in cultural history. (The sixth chapter will delight anyone who has wondered about the grand Russian melody inhabiting both the third movement of Beethoven's second "Rasoumovsky" Quartet and the "Coronation Scene" in *Boris Godunov*—one of the stranger coincidences in European music.)

Taruskin proceeds, as he says, "by getting beyond the facile categories and the shopworn propaganda—and by discarding the composer's flawed and unattractive person as finally irrelevant to the import of his greatest works." And what are the most scandalous findings of such a procedure? That Musorgsky was a competent composer who generally knew what he was about, and an aristocratic artist who resented Russia's rabble; that his art was evolving up to the end of his life; that he was a vicious anti-Semite. To those unfamiliar with the composer and his reputation, these may seem to be rather tame assertions, but they overturn or alter nearly all the standard notions about him. By comparison, the ostensibly much more sensational speculation on Musorgsky's homosexuality, which Taruskin touches on twice in passing, are by now old news, and certainly a great deal less important to his *oeuvre*.

Taruskin is an assiduous student of Russian intellectual history who makes the crucial assumption that the arts and the ideas of nineteenth-century Russia were inextricably intertwined: time and again he shows how intellectual current flowed directly into art. The key to his revisionist characterization of the com-

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poser is his interpretation of the role of Stasov ("the most prolific and polymorphous arts journalist Russia has ever known") in Musorgsky's life and career. Taruskin shows us a Stasov who is less James Boswell to Musorgsky's Samuel Johnson than he is Don King to the composer's Mike Tyson. It was Stasov who publicized the composer as a raw *naif* and rambunctious *narodnik* who peaked with *Boris Godunov* in the early 1870s, was hounded mercilessly by blinkered officials and then spiraled into musical mediocrity and the morass of drink. This view was then handed on by the long-lived commentator, who died in 1906, to the first Soviet generation of musicologists, led by the venerable Boris Asaf'ev. The Stasovian myth became gospel in the Soviet Union because it happened to suit perfectly the needs of Soviet musicological propaganda, and it gained primacy in the West thanks to the influence of Stasov acquaintances, such as M. D. Calvocoressi, who credulously echoed opinions heard from Musorgsky's tireless spokesman.

Stripped of the Stasovian veneer, however, Musorgsky, who was the scion of a gentry family made destitute by sweeping social reform, emerges as a refined, often elegant figure, whose depictions of "the people" in *Boris Godunov* do more to demonstrate the fickleness of the mob mentality than to define their creator as a proto-populist. The era of unquestioning faith in Stasov's declarations is, thankfully, at an end, as is further attested by the publication of Caryl Emerson and Robert William Oldani's new book, *Modest Musorgsky and Boris Godunov: Myths, Realities and Reconsiderations* (Cambridge University Press). A de-Stasovized examination of Musorgsky's correspondence and patterns of work suggests that he is in fact not "the Oblomov of Russian music"; not the unkempt and barely competent amateur who was terrorized into altering *Boris Godunov* by the Imperial Theaters Directorate; not the headstrong visionary who was injured by conductor Eduard Napravnik's suggestions for cuts when that opera was first produced, in 1874; not the prophet of revolution who was "mortally offended" when the Mariinsky Theater decided, from 1876, to drop the opera's frightening final mob scene, set in Kromy Forest; not the feckless victim of an operatic boondoggle called *Sorochintsy Fair* that distracted his attention from worthier projects at the end of his sad life.

Writing of *Boris Godunov*, Taruskin declares that "Musorgsky was eager, not reluctant, to revise his opera." He shows that Musorgsky welcomed the opportunity to recast an opera whose tone he was beginning to outgrow, to receive the expert opinion of a superb and seasoned conductor, to rethink the portrait of chilling sadism he had made the foundation of the Kromy scene, to allow his operatic style a continued evolution from Russian-style recitative into a more mellifluous manner. About all these cases, Taruskin at last gives credence to the memoirs of the composer's friend and onetime roommate and eventual Court Poet, Arseny Golenishchev-Kutuzov, a source long considered anathema by Soviet critics.

Taruskin's final radical assertion is clearly made in spite of his affection for the composer, and it palpably causes the author pain. It is that Musorgsky, despite the sanitizing efforts of Soviet editors, and even more than his nationalistic *kúchka* comrades (Rimsky-Korsakov being an egregious exception to this ugly tendency), despised Jews. Though Musorgsky had a strong interest in and admiration for "Jewish" folk music, as Boris Schwarz has argued, Taruskin illuminates the crucial distinction, made by Musorgsky and many Russians of the time, between what they saw as the ancient, noble "Hebrews" (*evréi*) and the plaguey, post-exilic "Yids" (*zhidý*). This latter term is, and was, as noxious in Russian as "Yid" is in English, and Musorgsky's correspondence is simply saturated with it.

The official Soviet unwillingness to reveal the composer's well-developed anti-Semitism in print led to a particularly degrading situation for the two eminent Jewish editors of the definitive edition of Musorgsky's letters and literary documents. They were forced to replace every occurrence of *zhid* with a fastidiously bracketed *evrei*, and numbly annotated an especially blatant anti-Jewish diatribe as "to be explained not by the composer's chauvinistic views, but by his antipathy toward the bourgeois mercantile element in general." If you believe this, Taruskin has got a Kremlin he'd like to sell you.

Along the way Taruskin elucidates what must surely be the composer's actual intent in "'Samuel' Goldenburg and 'Schmuÿle,'" one of the liveliest numbers in *Pictures from an Exhibition*. The title just quoted is the long-suppressed name Musorgsky in fact gave that particular musical episode, which is now usually supplied with the censored heading, "Two Jews (*evreia*): Rich and Poor." Taruskin explains the depressing implications of the original title: "The use of quotation marks points up the fact that the two *zhidy* have the same first name: one Germanized, the other in the original Yiddish. They are in fact one *zhid*, not two. The portrayal is a brazen insult: no matter how dignified or sophisticated or Europeanized a *zhid*'s exterior, on the inside he is a jabbering, pestering little "Schmuÿle." Anyone familiar with the musical portrait will immediately grasp the sense this makes, and perhaps also feel the pang of dread that Musorgsky was, as Taruskin asserts, "Russia's most conspicuously anti-Semitic composer."

Taruskin's project succeeds signally in fulfilling the injunction that concludes his first chapter:

> Let us begin to remember him less as the unkempt, red-nosed subject of Repin's all-too-famous portrait, and more in terms of the elegant, lapidary calligraphy of his manuscripts. The former may appeal more to our imagination in its evocation of Musorgsky's tragic fate. But there can be no question that the latter is a truer reflection of the creative artist.

Taruskin shows us a Musorgsky who was in conscious control of his medium, whose music and thought were much more deliberate than a century of myth-making has led us to suspect. And for this reason Musorgsky must henceforth carry the discomfiting paradox of great product and grim prejudice, the same burden borne by some of the most formidably creative of modern minds.

This is a legacy that is lamentably pertinent to present-day Russia as it lurches forward and backward on the road to reform. Taruskin knows this, too. In a timely epilogue on "Musorgsky in the Age of *Glasnost*," he reviews the attitudes of critics and producers in the era of glasnost toward Musorgsky's incendiary operas of political chaos and inescapable misery. Once the lid was off in the 1980s, some of Musorgsky's packagers, "by reversing black and white but still omitting gray," made the composer into "the grim prophet of Soviet tyranny," the exposer of Bolshevik-style regicide and even a religious guide. Other interpreters displayed a more sobering conception of the composer by presenting a "reading of Musorgsky's work as embodying a pessimistic—or at the very least, an ambivalent—outlook on history, and on the historical role of the Russian people." Buoyed by the resistance to the August 1991 coup attempt, Taruskin optimistically concluded his book with a simple truth: "A Russia in which Musorgsky no longer looks like a prophet is the Russia we all long to see." But the prospect of this Russia, which seemed so attainable when Taruskin wrote those words, grows dimmer with each passing week.

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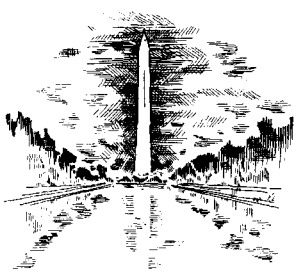
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Chilliest testosterone

WITH HONORS, ALEK KESHISHIAN'S movie about four Harvard roommates who learn charity and humility by taking in a homeless man closed recently after an aborted run. I wish it had done better; for Keshishian and I were college classmates, and he appears to have borrowed his plot from my life. In the movie, a cuddly bum named Simon (played by Joe Pesci) finds the only copy of an honors thesis written by Monty, a Harvard senior, and trades it back for food and lodgings. In real life, my tenderhearted roommate, Paul, met a homeless person named Max while collecting money to save the whales, and gave him an open-ended invitation to sleep in our common room. In the movie, Monty has a bookish roommate named Jeffrey (!), who nervously resents Simon's presence. "You know why you hate me so much, Jeffrey?" Simon taunts. "Because I look the way you feel." In real life, I had similarly distressing confrontations with Max, especially after he went on a mad joyride in my rental car, threatened me with an antique scythe and rampaged around the dorm, shattering Victorian lamps. Here, unfortunately, life diverges from art. In the movie, the four roommates make peace with Simon, whom they come to recognize as a repository of earthy wisdom and humanity; when Simon dies of asbestos poisoning, a tearful Jeffrey reads selections from *Leaves of Grass* over his grave. In real life, Max lingered on and on: for two years, whenever Max was in a pinch, Paul would vacate his bedroom and move in with his girlfriend, leaving me and our third roommate fearful and alone with the belligerent guest. I haven't seen Max since graduation, when he interrupted an emotional farewell in our suite and theatrically denounced us as pigs. Somehow, he still seemed less cloying than Joe Pesci.

THE CORRESPONDENCE BIN AT TNR is full of mysteries. Erudite literary criticism provokes little reaction from readers; spine-tingling judicial profiles have been known to inspire no letters at all. But all of us at the office were surprised by the reaction to Martha Gellhorn's recent essay lamenting the failure of responsible journalists to challenge the assaults on President and Mrs. Clinton in the right-wing press. In the past few weeks, scores of letters have poured in, almost all of them deliriously positive. "Brava to Martha Gellhorn!" the correspondents exclaim. "President Clinton may not be perfect, but he's the best we've had since FDR." I had initially found the piece a little nostalgic but now recognize that Gellhorn has tapped into something more profound. It is the dissonance between the bland earnestness of the Clintons themselves and the gothic ecstasies of hatred they manage to inspire. The bible of the Clinton-haters, of course, is *The American Spectator*. Once a clever and appealingly subversive journal, it has become unhinged in the Clinton era by dark populist resentments. The latest issue features a Shakespearean fantasy in which the Clintons appear as Lord and Lady "Macdeth" and the ghosts of Vince Foster and Mary Jo Kopechne haunt the earth. Hillary's soliloquy is an unintentional self-parody of the genre: "O come, ye Wellesley-spawned Eumenides of spite, unsex me here! Replace my blood with quarts of chilliest testosterone, and butch my hair. . . ." The president's couplets are a little less heavy-handed: "But let our morning's revels look to botany / If she's at Rose, then I'll with Flowers be." This is a hard act for the *Spectator* to follow; expect Little Rock variations on *The Rape of Lucrece*.



SIMILARLY OVER-THE-TOP IS THE recent performance of Governor Mario Cuomo, who deserves the Orval Faubus award for unblushing efforts to thwart the Supreme Court. At the end of June, in the most important religion case of the year, the Court invalidated the Kiryas Joel school district as an impermissible fusion of church and state. A few days later, in the last hours of the legislative session, the New York assembly, with Cuomo's enthusiastic support, passed a bill that purported to circumvent the Court's decision by allowing *many* villages in the state to form their own school districts. The bill includes, however, suspiciously rigorous size and wealth requirements. If the bill had in fact applied neutrally to villages across the state, then it would have satisfied David Souter's concern that the Satmar Hasidim were being singled out for a special benefit. This week, however, the New York State School Board Association ran the numbers and concluded that demographic requirements of the bill are so Byzantine that only one village in the state is eligible to meet them: the village of Kiryas Joel itself. New York, in short, has produced another religious gerrymander of the most flamboyant kind. As judicial nullification goes, this is only a little more subtle than the state of Virginia's reaction to the *Brown* decision: it closed the public schools and then promptly reopened them as white academies run by private contractors. Cuomo's strategy of massive resistance is ultimately doomed; but he has succeeded in delaying a legal challenge to the real constitutional scandal, which is not the school district of Kiryas Joel but the village of Kiryas Joel. As *The Wall Street Journal* confirmed last month, the village is thriving as a municipal theocracy in which federal funds are laundered for religious uses. Why is the would-be justice from New York pandering to this medieval rabbinate after all of his preaching about the separation of church and state? For the same reason, sadly, that he recently abandoned his cardinal principle that the death penalty in New York should not be decided by majoritarian passions. November is near.

I KNOW ONE HASIDIC SECT THAT doesn't need any state support for its religious schools: the Lubavitchers, blood rivals of the Satmars, who are mourning the death of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson in June. With no help from the governor, the Lubavitchers have refined a brutally effective method of parochial education. The memory of it makes me break into a cold sweat. As a law student, I was often accosted by the brightly colored "Mitzvah tanks"—mobile homes outfitted with smiling pictures of the Grand Rabbi and tinny speakers blaring Yiddish airs. "Step up and put on Tefillin!" shrieked the bright yellow banners. "Tefillin on board!" To a nonobservant Jew at a northeastern university, there is no more nightmarish prospect than the anxiety of being plucked off an elm-lined street and helplessly wrapped in the vestments of the seventeenth-century shtetl. Worse yet, anyone who came near the tank was assaulted with an extremely fraught question: "Excuse me, are you *Jewish*?" Once, out of curiosity and shame, I sheepishly climbed onto the truck and allowed myself to be bound up in phylacteries. Shivering awkwardly in the winter chill, I felt relieved for having survived the experience, until my inquisitor dramatically raised the stakes by inviting me to accompany him back to Crown Heights for full-time talmudic study. When I demurred he lashed out angrily, accusing me of turning my back on God and my people. Next to such fearsome teachers, the blessings of Mario Cuomo seem particularly vain.

JEFFREY ROSEN

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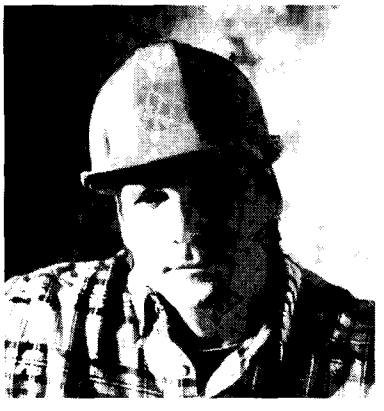
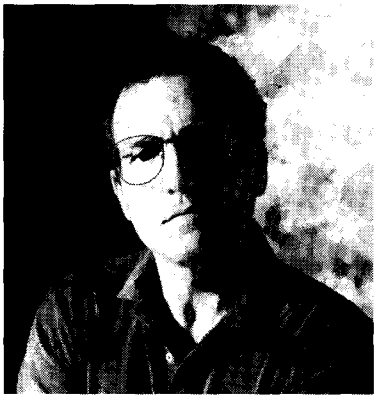
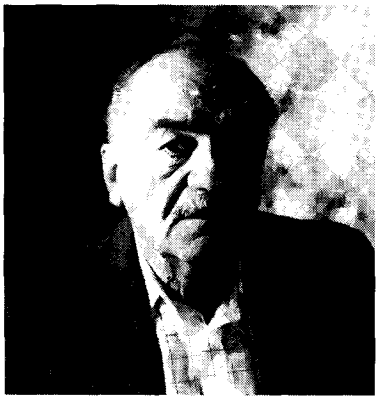
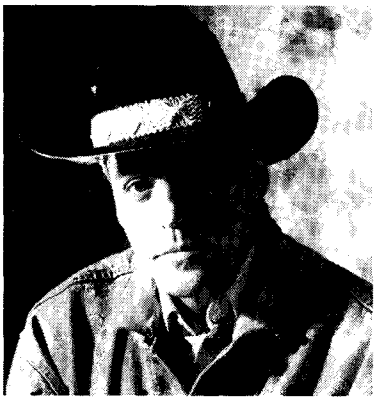
103 MILLION AMERICANS CAN'T BE WRONG.









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